Jagadguru

BHAGAWAAN GOPINATH JI



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A Biographical Study,

by

SN Fotedaar

Second (revised) Edition.

Editor:

JN Sharma

Published by
The Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust (Regd),
Durga Mandir, Kharayaar, Habba Kadal,
Srinagar - 190 001 Kashmir. (INDIA)
(Camp: Udaiwala Road, Borhi, Jammu Tawi, J & K, INDIA)

First Edition (1974) - 10,000 copies
Second (revised) Edition (1991) - 4,000 copies

PRICE:
Paper - back — Rs. 12.00 / US $ 1
Hard - bound — Rs. 25.00 / US $ 2

Printed at
THE PRESS,
1/9500, Mohan Park,
Navin Shahdara,
Delhi-32

॥ ॐ नमो भगवते गोपीनाथाय ॥

To
the Lotus Feet of my Sadguru,
Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, which inspired
this biographical sketch.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Though Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji never moved out of the Kashmir Valley, he was well-known amongst the numerous *saadhus* who came to Kashmir from the remote corners of India and who even now remember Him as a unique *siddha* and *avadhoota*, a realized soul and man of great compassion. They miss His physical presence even now. They say that in India such unique saints, who remain absorbed in the *Brahma Swarupa* all the twenty-four hours of a day, are very rare to find.

In Kashmir, too, Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji was very well known, as he helped many men in spiritual advancement and others in their worldly pursuits.

During my life-span of about 77 years, I have come in contact with many saints, some of them highly evolved, but I do not think any one of them surpassed Him in His realization of the Self in its egoless state. People called him 'Bhagawaan' and indeed he was that. I personally knew him for many years, particularly since the decade 1937-46 when he stayed at my father-in-law's house, and I always felt great solace in his presence whenever I went to have his *darshana*.

The author, Shri Shankar Nath Fotedar, has, therefore, done a really great job, in putting on record his reminiscences and giving a vivid picture of the life activities of this great saint of Kashmir as, otherwise, these would be lost to posterity.

He is well-qualified to write on this difficult subject as, by Bhagawaan Ji's grace, he is gifted with a keenly observant eye and an analytical mind and has passed more than two decades in close association with Him. Earlier, he was in close contact with Swaami Sona

Kaak Ji, an outstanding saint of Kashmir, for about fifteen years at my ancestral home and, in fact, it was he (Swaami Sona Kaak) who directed Shri Fotedar to keep meeting the 'Pandit saint living in Dalhasanyaar *Mohalla*' (i.e. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji) about six months before Swaami Sona Kaak attained *mahaanirvaana* in Baisakh, 1999 (Bikrami). Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji then met Shri Fotedar for the first time at the Shri Ksheerbhawaani Shrine in the year 1946 AD; He (Bhagawaan Ji) himself came and sat by his side and offered him his half-smoked cigarette.

Shri Fotedar since then had been calling at Bhagawaan Ji's place every afternoon, spending three to four hours in His holy presence, whenever he (Shri Fotedar) was in Srinagar (about seven months in a year) and was absorbed in *saadhanaa* in His august presence. He was lucky, as Bhagawaan Ji sometimes pointed out the shortcomings in his practice and corrected him in his characteristic way, and he has progressed well on the road to higher spirituality under the guidance and blessings of the Master Himself.

It is due to his great devotion to Bhagawaan Ji and his ideals, coupled with his untiring zeal and assisted by a group of brilliant young devotees of Bhagawaan Ji (Shri Pran Nath Kaul, Shri Shiban Lal Turki, Sister Jai Kishori Ji, Shri Gopi Nath Malla, Shri Mohan Kishen Ticku and Shri J.L. Nehru) that, for the first time in the annals of Kashmir, a monument, worthy of a great saint has been raised to inspire the future aspirants and seekers on the path of God-realization.

Jai Bhagawaan.

Shridhar Joo Dhar,
Retired Conservator of Forests,
and President, Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Turst.



The author at the feet of the Master

INTRODUCTION

India, the home of sages and savants for centuries past, heir to one of the oldest civilizations in the world, temple of inspiration for the seekers of the truth and spiritual knowledge, is now a witness to cataclysmic changes within itself. The society that is taking birth is sans the roots which helped to sustain it, when avalanches swept away many other civilizations in the past. Soon enough, we may find ourselves rudderless and enslaved, like the West, to the cult of materialism, unless we make positive efforts to arrest and reverse this new, apparently tempting, though dangerous, trend. We must re-discover ourselves and recapture our lost values and faith in the Almighty, the Universal *Aatman* who sustains and controls the destiny of the World.

Apart from the *avataaras*, Shri Rama, Shri Krishna, the Buddha and Shri Mahaavira, India gave birth to a galaxy of saints, who played a notable part in raising the moral standards and blazing the trail for God-realization in a manner suited to the times they lived in. What the saints preached and practised conformed to the basic tenets of our scriptures, but dogmatic ritualism was, to a large extent, eliminated. Because of their super-sensory perception, saints may be regarded as supermen working in all dimensions and can, therefore, guide us, three-dimensional beings, much better on the paths of God-realization and our journey through life.

The names of the illustrious saints like Guru Nanak, Kabir, Mirabaai, Tuka Ram, Ram Dass, Chaitanya, Ramakirshna Parmahansa, Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, Sai Baba and Chaturbhuja Sahai come instantly to mind. Kashmir, too, was fortunate in having a galaxy of saints like Lalleshwari, Roopa Bhavaani,

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, Zaina Shah, Reshipir, Zai Kaak (Zanaana Zoi), Jeewan Sahib, Mirza Kaak, Aatma Raam ji, Lasa Sahib, Swaami Sona Kaak, Aftab Koul, Aanand Ji, Kailas Koul, Raam Ji (Shaiva philosopher), Zana Kaak Tufchi, Prasad Joo Sahib, Chandra Kaak Buchru, Sahib Koul, Shyaam Sunder Koul, Manas Razdan, Maana Kaak Goja, Kaakaa Ji, Gana Mole, Sobur Sheikh and Trihgam Baba. Some of these were *karma yogis* and actively participated in moulding the destiny of Kashmir. Saint-hood was a regular institution and people flocked to saints. Some people sought spiritual solace (advancement) but a larger number went to them to seek the fulfilment of mundane desires or to ward off calamities. The situation has changed. Very few good saints are to be seen now-a-days. Perhaps they have gone into seclusion. If you tell a young man that God exists, the chances are that he will scoff at the very idea and, unbelieving, demand of you to show him God on the palm of your hand, i.e., a limited three- dimensional God, perceived with our five senses. All that one can do under the circumstances is to refer him to the saints who know the past and the present, and can predict the future. Their supernatural powers may stir up his imagination, and his faith in God may revive.

The institution of sainthood is fast disappearing and in the near future people will be wondering what saints were like and how they lived and behaved. With this background and for the benefit of posterity, I am writing this short biographical sketch of one of the rarest saints of Kashmir of this century, Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji who gave up the gross body at the age of about 70 in 1968 AD. People used to call him Bhagawaan Ji or Bub (father) as he had endeared himself to one and all.

I had the unique privilege of being associated with him for the last 22 years of his life. While in Srinagar

(7 to 8 months in a year) I used to visit him everyday, sitting before him in humble supplication for 3 to 4 hours, and keenly observe his ways. The facts and events narrated here are those I observed personally or were reported by his relatives or other disciples who knew him relatively closely. From amongst his relatives, most of the information has been given by Pt Gobind Kaul, a companion of Bhagawaan Ji since his early bodyhood, Pt Maadhava Joo Sathu, in whose house he lived for about 10 years and his own sister, Shrimati Jaanaki Devi. Much useful information has been collected by Pt Pran Nath Kaul, Pt Shiban Lal Turki and Sister Jai Kishori Ji—all disciples of Bhagawaan Ji. Pt Shankar Nath Zaadu and Pt Gopi Nath Dhar, devotees of Bhagawaan Ji, have also provided very useful information. Pt Shridhar Joo Dhar, Pt Gopi Nath Malla, Pt Mohan Kishen Ticku, Pt Shyaam Lal Dhar and Pt J.L. Nehru, though they had limited contacts with him, have also played their part in making this enterprise possible.

As there are few authentic records of the past and the living saints of Kashmir, this biography is published lest we lose memory of the life activities of this great saint of Kashmir also. The subject-matter has been divided into fourteen chapters.

Chapter I gives the information about his birth and genealogy in order to maintain an authentic record of them.

Chapter II: As he had to shift residence from place to place on account of the family circumstances in his early life, and later, of his own choosing, the places he lived at and the time he spent at each place, have been given corresponding to his age and the progressive stages in his *saadhanaa*.

The relevant facts about his education, employment

and initiation have been given in Chapter III.

The pilgrimages he went on and a few of his miracles at each place have been given in Chapter IV, to give a connected account of the background of his *saadha-naa.*

To give an idea of his activities, his daily routine, his dress, food, drink, personal hygiene and fasts etc., have been spoken about in Chapter V.

Chapter VI gives an account of his attitude to marriage and sex. This has a great bearing on the spiritual advancement of *saadhakas.*

In Chapter VII, his generous nature has been described.

Chapter VIII gives an account of Bhagawaan Ji 's *darshana* to the general public, his ways of curing ailments and his attitude to the offerings made to him.

As the places where he stayed are definite landmarks in his life, each period of *saadhanaa* along with the important events connected therewith are reported in Chapter IX.

Chapter X dwells upon the peculiarities observed in his behaviour during the last two years of life.

Chapter XI deals with his giving up the gross body.

Chapter XII deals with some of the miracles performed by him for the good of the country or for some individuals.

Chapter XIII gives a resume of his philosophy.

Chapter XIV deals with his devotees and disciples, past and present.

How far I have succeeded in portraying the life of Bhagawaan Ji, I leave to the readers to judge. It would readily be conceded that it is always difficult to wirte about, or on those who have merged themselves with the *Nirguna Brahman* unless the writer himself has attained a degree of spiritual advancement. As for myself, I lay no claim to the status of even a reporter on the realization of this sort which transcends all temporal experiences. I have nevertheless attempted sincerely to piece together this narration, in order to preserve what would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I, therefore, claim the reader's indulgence and will feel amply rewarded if this biographical sketch helps to rekindle in his or her mind the urge for God-realization.

After this work is published, it is proposed to issue a #Hindi version of this biography. Pt Pran Nath Koul, M.A. B.Ed and Sister Jai Kishori Ji, M.Sc. are being entrusted with this task.

After more information becomes available, it is proposed to bring out a revised edition of this biography. This task is being entrusted to a Committee comprising the following:

1. Shri Mohan Kishen Ticku, B.A., Organiser, Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Trust.
2. Shri Pran Nath Kaul, M.A. B.Ed., Secretary, BGT.
3. Shri Shiban Lal Turki, B.Sc., Joint Secretary, BGT.
4. Sister Jai Kishori Ji, M.Sc., Librarian, BGT.

In course of time, an Urdu edition of this biography would also be published. This work will be entrusted to

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The Hindi version has since been published. -Ed.

1. Pt Gopi Nath Malla, Vice-President, BGT.
2. Pt Jia Lal Nehru, Manager, BGT.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge with thanks the help rendered by the following gentlemen in preparing this biography:

1. Pt Shridhar Joo Dhar, President, BGT., for his encouragement in this enterprise and for his valuable suggestions.

2. Professor Prem Nath Qazi, retired Principal, Govt. College, Jammu, and a few other people for revising the draft with painstaking care.

3. Pt Hriday Nath Koul, Editor, *Research: Trika Philosophy and Culture,* Pt P.N. Nehru of the Shaiva Philosophy Ashram (known as Raam Ashram), Shri Lakshmi Narasinha Shastri for his article in the *Kalyaan*, 'The Place of Vishnu According to Shankaracharya' and Shri Ramaswami Iyer for his article in the *Kalyaan*', 'The *Bhagvadgita* Both as a Metaphysics and an Art of Life' from which some material has been quoted.

4. Pt Pran Nath Kaul and Pt M.K. Ticku of the BGT. for getting the manuscript typed.

Shankar Nath Fotedar

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The author, the late Pandit Shankar Nath Fotedar, envisaged a revised edition of this biographical study which would also include the information that would come to light from time to time. In order to preserve that information and to let the general public know about the Ashram activities, the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust (BGT) started the publication of the *News Letter* which was subsequently incorporated into the *The BGT Patrika*. Most of the information, especially that about Bhagawaan Ji's early life and some of his miracles, has been included in this edition. The material gathered from some other sources, too, has been included and, in each case, the authentic source, mentioned. Each newly-included item has been marked with an asterik.

The text may be said to have been 'updated' only in this sense; the information such as that about some people being alive, some structures existing or the then office-bearers of the BGT, has not been modified in any manner.

The original text has been revised mostly from the stylistic and language points of view, and the English equivalents of some non-English words and expressions have been substituted. However, in relation to Bhagawaan Ji, 'gave up the gross body' has been substituted for the expressions like 'merged with the Infinite' and 'attained *mahaanirvaana*', because a number of spiritual aspirants in the country and abroad say that he has been appearing before them or in their meditation in his astral form in order to guide them on their respective spiritual paths (and hence the appellation *Jagadguru* used with his name.) This suggests that, out of his own volition, he has retained his astral body with a view to doing good

to others, though his spiritual state is that described in The *Bhagvadgita*, XV, 6 (see Pp 85-86 of this book).

All the views and interpretations are, of course, those of the author and have not been tampered with.

More and more facts about Bhagawaan Ji keep coming to light. These will be included in the subsequent editions of the book.

New Delhi
17th March, 1991.
(First *Navaraatra*)

J N Sharma

Chapter I

THE BIRTH, THE ANTECEDENTS AND THE FAMILY

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was born on the auspicious Friday, the 19th Har, 1955 (Bikrami), corresponding to 3rd July, 1898 AD at Bhanamohalla, Srinagar (Kashmir), in one of the most highly esteemed Bhan families of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Bhagawaan Ji's grandfather was Shri Lachhman Joo Bhan, a *Wazir Wazaarat* (the equivalent of a Deputy Commissioner of these days) in the Dogra regime in the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.

His father, Pandit Naraayan Joo Bhan, did the *pashmina* wool business. He was spiritually very advanced and devoted most of his time to religious pursuits. He gave up his ancestral home and other possessions in favour of his stepmother.

Bhagawaan Ji's mother, Shrimati Haara Maalee, was a very pious lady. She was the only daughter of Pt Prasaad Joo Paarimoo, a saint whom people used to call Zada Bharata. He had no issue and adopted a son. Shortly after, while in *samaadhi* at the Kshir Bhawaani Shrine at Tulamula, he had a vision of Shri Raajnaa Bhagavati, who chided him for having adopted a son, as She Herself was taking birth in his house. Soon after, was born to him a daughter who was destined to be Bhagawaan Ji's mother.

*According to Shri J.P. Paarimoo, a first cousin of Bhagawaan Ji from the mother's side, Pt Prasaad Joo Paarimoo was a co-disciple of Swaami Anand Ji of

Jamanagari, Shopian, Kashmir. 'Satsang' was held as a matter of routine at his house. His second daughter, Zapri Dedi, lost her husband at the very early age of thirteen. She was initiated by her father into *japa*-yoga and progressed well on the spiritual path, being recognised as a saint when she was around fifty.

Bhagawaan Ji's maternal uncle, Pt Bhagawaan Dass Paarimoo, was a devotee of the Divine Mother in her Shaarikaa Bhagawati form. He performed every day the *parikramaa* of Haari Parvat, the abode of Shri Shaarikaa. 'He would be back home at dawn. De-silting the holy spring at Pokhribal (at the foot of Haari Parvat) once or twice a year was a regular practice. Gopinath was the man to descend into the spring and perform the laborious work of removing the mud, the accumulated rotten flowers and other things which had settled at the bottom of the spring because of the indiscriminate offerings of the devotees to the spring. An annual *yajna* was performed at Pokhribal. *Sat-sang*, and the teaching of the various scriptures like *Yoga Vaashishtha* was a regular feature of our domestic routine'.#

Bhagawaan Ji had two brothers. The one elder to him was called Pt Govind Joo Bhan, He was an employee in the Customs and Excise Department, and died in 1946 AD. He was a bachelor and maintained Bhagawaan Ji. His younger brother, Pt Jia Lal, was a draftsman in the State PWD and had been adopted in a family of the Kaaks living at Sathu, Srinagar. He was married but had no issue. He, too, was spiritually very advanced and very liberal towards *saadhus* and the poor. He passed away in 1964 AD.

Bhagawaan Ji had two sisters. The sister elder to him, Shrimati Deva Maali, was widowed at an early age after giving birth to two daughters. It was her tender

J.P. Paarimoo: 'Early Life of Shri Bhagawaan Ji' (The Ashram *News Letter*, Vol. I, No. 2)

care that sustained Bhagawaan Ji during the period of his rigorous *saadhanaa*. She remained with him for a major portion of his life, taking care of his food, clothing and so on. She died in 1965 AD. She had two daughters. The elder one, Shrimati Kamalaa Ji, died after giving birth to a son and two daughters. It was in her house that Bhagawaan Ji lived for about eleven years at Chondapora, and gave up the gross body. Shrimati Dev Mali's younger daughter, Chaandaa Ji, is alive. Before Bhagawaan Ji moved to the house of Kamalaa Ji, he lived in her house for about ten years at Rishi Mohalla, Srinagar. She served him very well during this period and also when he lived at Rangteng, Srinagar (1930-37) during the period of his intense *saadhanaa*.

Bhagawaan Ji's younger sister, Shrimati Jaanaki Devi, was widowed at an early age after giving birth to two sons and two daughters. She, too, used to serve him on specific occasions and was very much devoted to him.

Chapter II

EARLY LIFE AND SOJOURN AT VARIOUS PLACES

Bhagawaan Ji was born at his ancestral house at Bhana Mohalla, Srinagar, in a room on the ground floor. Though over 75 years have elapsed since the building was constructed, it is in good condition today, and a tower was added to it some years ago. His early childhood was spent in this house. After his father, Pandit Naraayan Joo Bhan, had given up his house and other possessions in favour of his stepmother and when Bhagawan Ji was about ten, the family had to keep shifting to various places. From the details given by Shrimati Janaki Devi, the latter's younger sister, it appears that the family had to live at the places in Srinagar for the periods noted against each in the table given below.

	The house owner's name	The name of the place in Srinagar	The period of stay at the house	Bhagawaan Ji's age at the end of each period	The year (AD)
1.	Pt Shiva Ji Khyabri	Bhaana Mohalla	1 1/2 years	11 1/2yr.	1909
2.	Pt Kesho Joo Nagri	Shaalayar	3 years	14 1/2yr.	1912
3.	Pt Kailash Joo Bhan	Razwerikadal	1 1/2 years	16 years	1913
4.	Pt Prasaad Joo Paarimoo	Sekidafar	7 years	23 years	1920
5.	Pt Kesho Joo Dhar	Safa Kadal	3 years	26 years	1923
6.	Pt Dina Nath Botta	Rang-teng	6 years	32 years	1929
7.	Pt Tika Lal	Rang-teng	7 years	39 years	1936
8.	Pt Nila Koul Saraf	Dalhasanyaar	10 years	49 years	1946
9.	Pt Madhava Joo Sathu	Rishi Mohalla	10 years	59 years	1956
10.	Pt Shyam Lal Malla	Chondapora	11 years	70 years	1968

Bhagawaan Ji lost his mother when the family lived at place No. 2, and he was a boy of about twelve. He lost his father at place No.6 when he was between 26 and 32 years of age.

The earliest employment taken up by him was when

he was at place No.3. The employment lasted for about three years. While residing at place Nos. 4 and 5, he ran a *kiryaana* shop first at Chaidob and then at Sekidaafar, Srinagar.

*Shri J.P. Paarimoo says, 'During this period, he used to be the leader of the group he had formed around him. He would organise trips to Kshirbhavaani, Mahaadev and Vichaarang, and play the role of the leader. He was always brave and fearless and hated dishonesty. He was fond of going to saints. One of his close associates says that he used to go to a saintly person named Zanakaak, putting up in the attic of a small one-storeyed hut of one Sat Lal Waangnoo, a bachelor devotee of Zanakaak, at Habba Kadal. This Zanakaak had Krishnakaak as his guru, as mentioned in his *Vaakyas*. This goes back to the days when Bhagawaan Ji was reading in the 7th or the 8th class. (Source of information: Pt Dina Nath Shaali, Karan Nagar) There, he used to go for many years, even after the death of this saint. While at Sekidaafar, he would press the feet of a 'Jataadhaari' saint, named Swaami Baalak Kaaw, popularly known as Baal Ji. Baal Ji used to give him recognition and consideration. In 1923, the Shaalis and the Paarimoos arranged a pilgrimage to Mattan on Vijaya Saptami. They went by boat to Khanabal. At Khanabal, wherefrom they had to go on foot to Mattan, Bhagawaan Ji, along with one or two associates, left the group, and went to pay respects to the saint Jeewan Saheb living somewhere on that side of the Valley.#

At place No.6, he was busy with his *saadhanaa* but, occasionally, attended to family matters as well.

It was at place No. 7 that he renounced everything. This was the period of his intense *saadhanaa* which continued to the time that he gave up the gross body.

Ibid.

Chapter III

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

From the information gleaned from various sources, we have been able to ascertain that Bhagawaan Ji had passed the Middle School Examination. The Middle standard of those days, it is said, was equivalent to the Matriculation standard of these days. In his ecstatic moods, he would sometimes utter beautiful English sentences. He could read and write Sanskrit in both the Devanaagari and Shaaradaa scripts. He had attained mastery over Urdu and Persian as well. Since his earliest boyhood, he had shown great interest in Sanskrit, and would recite from memory beautiful Sanskrit verses in an impressive way. In his early life, he was known to have recited, without any aid, the *Bhavaani Sahsranaama*, the *Indraakshi*, the *Panchastavi*, the *Vishnu Sahsranaama*, the *Mahimnastrota*, the *Shivastotraavali* and the *Vaaks* of some Kashmiri saints. In his later life, he would recite verses from the above-mentioned texts whenever he was in a mood to do so. He had great interest in *Shrimad-Bhagavadgita*, a copy of which lay before him till he gave up the gross body. But, during the last thirty years of his life, nobody saw him reading these texts. Probably, he had memorized all these in his early life. It is not known whether he had studied any text on the Upanishadic thought or the *Trika* Shaiva philosophy, for which Kashmir has been so famous. It is however, a fact that he attended the *satsangas* of scholars and saints in his early life when discussions on Vedaanta and Kashmir Shaivism were very common. May be, he had studied the Upanishadic and the Shaiva texts as well.

Bhagawaan Ji, since his early youth, had been very reluctant to take up any bread-winning employment.

Because of the pressure from his parents and relatives and because of the straitended circumstances of the family, however, he was forced to take up such employment early in life. To begin with, he assisted his maternal uncle in the *pashmina* wool business, which was a flourishing industry in Kashmir those days. According to Shri J.P. Parimoo, his first regular employment was with the Vishi Nath Press in Srinagar as a compositor. Soon after Bhagawaan Ji had taken up employment in the Press, its business flourished. When he offered to relinquish his job three years later, the proprietor implored him to continue, but he refused, saying that his *dass daaraz* (dealings of the old incarnations) with the proprietor had ended. He gave up the job. 'It is said that next he got an offer from the proprietor of the Mercantile press, Srinagar... But he spurned the offer.'#

After this, he started a grocer's shop at Sekidaafar and, soon after, shifted his business to a nearby place Vaaniyar, Chaayidob. These premises still exist. Probably, he took up this work as it gave him more time for his *saadhanaa*. He appears to have worked at the grocer's shop for about ten years, i.e., till about 1925 AD. Though he sat at his shop, he remained absorbed, most of the time, in meditation, and spent even some nights there.

After he had given up running the shop, he plunged headlong into rigorous spiritual discipline, staking his very life with an iron will and a remarkable determination. Those alive to-day, who saw him at the shop, say that he talked seldom and seemed always to be lost in thought.

Chapter IV

INITIATION

It is not known for certain who Bhagawaan Ji's guru was. Some of his relatives were of the opinion that he was initiated by his own father, Pandit Naraayan Joo Bhan, but this was not borne out by his sister or by the testimony of the people who were his associates in his early life. His younger sister was of the opinion that, probably, he had received initiation from the great Kashmiri Saint, Swaami Baalak Joo Kaw. This, too, was not corroborated by any evidence. Bhagawaan Ji, in one of his soliloquies, some years before he gave up the gross body, addressed him as *'Hato Baalak Kaawaa'* meaning 'O, Baalak Kaawaa.' He would not have addressed him thus, had he been his guru. Bhagawaan Ji also sometimes visited Swaami Naraayan Joo Bhan, a well-known saint of Bodager, Srinagar. But the Swaami is said to have had only one disciple, Swaami Kash Kaak of Manigaam, and, hence, Bhagawaan Ji being his disciple is ruled out.

The evidence collected now shows that Bhagawaan Ji very often used to go to the house of Swaami Zana Kaak Tufchi of Karafalli Mohalla, Srinagar, who was a great saint. In his later life, Swaami Zana Kaak had moved to the house of Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu at Baabaapora, Srinagar. It is certain that Bhagawaan Ji used to go to the house of Swaami Zana Kaak, when the latter resided at Karafalli Mohalla, and very frequently when he resided at Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu's house. Every Saturday night, there used to be a *bhajan mandali* in his house, and Bhagawaan Ji would invariably be present at such *mandalis*, where the *Guru Gitaa* and the *Vaaks* alone were recited.

After Swaami ZanaKaak Tufchi had shaken off his mortal frame, Swaami Aftab Joo used to perform a big *yajna* ever year, on Swaami ZanKaak's death anniversary, which Bhagawaan Ji attended for many years, doing all sorts of work including even cooking and washing utensils, along with the other disciples of Swaami Zana Kaak Ji. This could only have been possible if either Swaami Zana Kaak or his disciple, Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu, had been his guru. Pt Maheshwar Nath Trisal of Badgaam, who associated with Bhagawaan Ji during the latter's early life, says that Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu was his guru. One instance given by Shri Trisal is that of an occasion when Swaami Aftab Joo addressed him as 'Goopiya, have you had the *darshana*?', Bhagawaan Ji replied, 'I am having *darshana'*, meaning that it was a continuing process for him. After I enquired of Shri Trisal whose *darshana* Bhagawaan Ji was having, he said that it was his guru's *darshana*.

The enquiries made from Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu's younger brother, Pt Baal Ji Waangnu, yielded the information that Swaami Zana Kaak was.Bhagawaan Ji's guru and that Swaami Aftab Joo was his brother disciple. This appears to me to be the correct position.

Some of Swaami Zana Kaak Tufchi's disciples alive today stated that Bhagawaan Ji was not among the known disciples of Swaami Zanakaak. It is possible that the Swaami had secretly initiated him. Bhagawaan Ji had been very subtle since his early childhood. It is just possible that he had been visiting the saints mentioned in this chapter to learn whatever he could from them, but without any involvement of an initiation. A few years before Bhagawaan Ji's giving up the mortal frame, a devotee had the courage to enquire of him who his guru was. Pointing towards the *Bhagvadgitaa* lying before him, he said, 'Any one of the 700

shlokas of the *Bhagvadgitaa* can be one's guru, and, in reality, God, Who is the True Self, is one's Guru.'

Of all the past saints of Kashmir, he alone was addressed as 'Bhagawaan' in his own life time. People also called him 'Bub', i.e., father. As he had attained the highest stage of consciousness and remained ever absorbed in the Supreme, there was nothing extraordinary in his being styled as 'Bhagawaan.'

Two others of the greatest saints of Kashmir, Lalla Dedi and Roopa Dedi were addressed as Lalleshwari and Roopa Bhavaani respectively, but that status came to them after their passing away, whereas Bhagawaan Ji was known as a living personification of God even in his life time.

Chapter V

VISITS TO SHRINES

Bhagawaan Ji never left the Kashmir Valley but used to have brief sojourns or, sometimes, longer halts at the various shrines in the Valley. A list of the shrines frequented by him and some interesting events connected with them are given below:-

1. Shri Shaarika Bhagawati Shrine at Haariparvat, Srinagar.

This shrine is situated on a hillock in the north of the city of Srinagar. Devotees go there early in the morning for a *parikramaa* round the hillock, and for *pooja* at Devi-aangan, which is an open space at the foot of the hillock, and in front of the main Chakreshwara Temple, constructed half-way up the hill-side. Bhagawaan Ji went to this shrine, sometimes early in the morning and sometimes late in the afternoon. Sometimes, he spent nights there in the house of one Pt Saligraam, a piest. Once, he stayed at this shrine for abount nine months, lodging in the house of one Pt Ram Joo, a priest alive to-day.

While living at Dalhasanyaar, Srinagar (1937-1946), Bhagawaan Ji once asked a devotee to accompany him to Haari Parvat. The devotee agreed on the condition that he should get a *darshana* of Shaarikaa Bhagawati. Bhagawaan Ji agreed. While he and the devotee were sitting at Devi-aangan in a hut, a very young and beautiful girl came and sat on the lap of the devotee, who was charmed, and forgot about having the Devi's *darshana*. He fed to her some sweets, purchased previously at Bhagawaan Ji's bidding. As soon as the girl got up to go, Bhagawaan Ji beckoned to him to follow her, but the devotee was puzzled, as the girl had

disappeared suddenly. The devotee had got the Devi's *darshana* according to his spiritual state at that time. Probably, he could not have stood the sight of the transcendental form of the Divine Mother, and so got her *darshana* in the human form.

Another incident, reported by Pt Shyaam Lal Raazdaan, working in the Forest Department of Jammu and Kashmir, is given below.

During the spring of 1944 or 1945, when almond trees were in full bloom, a group of devotees sitting in front of Bhagawaan Ji requested him to go with them to Haari Parvat, which is surrounded by almond orchards. He asked another person present, Pt Nila Koul saraaf, also to accompany him. But Pt Nila Koul said, 'The Devi is here also. Why should we go there?' However, somehow he was prevailed upon to go and the party of nine including Bhagawaan Ji, left for Hari Parvat at about 12 noon. They entered the Shrine through the exit gate of Kaathidarwazaa and proceeded to the Pokhribal Temple, inside which is a holy spring. As soon as they opened the small outer wicket gate, they saw a small girl of about five years, alone, playing with the fallen chinar leaves with a stick. They entered the inner gate and sat on a wooden platform inside the Shrine premises. Bhagawaan Ji asked Pt Nila Koul to get the small girl inside the Shrine. As soon as Pt Nila Koul brought her, Bhagawaan Ji made her sit on his lap and fed to her *naderimunjas* (a fried preparation made from lotus roots and rice flour) which he had asked a man (while they had been far away from the Shrine) to fetch from a confectioner's shop at Deviaangan. After feeding her, Bhagawaan Ji asked Pt Nila Koul to escort her back. She moved fast after coming out of the inner gate and disappeared. Pt Nila Koul came back. The party returned after taking salted tea. Enroute, as they came out of Kaathidarwaazaa, Pt Nila Koul said to Bhagawaan Ji banteringly, 'Have you

shown me the *darshana* of the Devi?' Bhagawaan Ji said, 'Did you not see the Devi, Whom you called to sit with us? Was She not fed, *naderimunjas* by me and did you not escort her back, at my bidding?' Pt Nila Koul understood the position and fell down in a swoon. With difficulty, he was almost dragged home by the party.

2. The Shrine of Raajnaa Bhagawati at Tulamula, known as Kshirbhavaani.

This place is situated about 16 miles north of Srinagar. For several years, Bhagawaan Ji would spend three or four months at a stretch at this shrine. He would occupy a hut in the precincts of the shrine, start his *dhooni* and sit in deep contemplation. He would very rarely go to the holy spring to offer worship but generally kept sitting in his hut smoking his *chillum*, offering oblations into his *dhooni* off and on and sometimes cooking his own food and feeding others also. People flocked round him but he was completely absorbted in deep contemplation.

A pious devotee of Raajnaa Bhagawati, who used to have the Devi's vision, was wonder-struck to notice Bhagawaan Ji's behaviour in not going to the holy spring for worship. Soon after, the devotee saw, in a trance, Raajnaa Bhagawati sitting on a resplendent throne and Bhagawaan Ji sitting nearby with his *chillum*. While at Kshirbhavaani, Bhagawaan Ji met a saint known as Nila Bab. While returning to Srinagar from the Shrine, Bhagawaan Ji, a devotee of his and Nila Bub took rest at the Dodarhaama camping ground. Nila Bub sat very near Bhagawaan Ji and made him uncomfortable by continuously jabbing his elbow into his sides, but Bhagawaan Ji said nothing. After they had resumed their journey, the devotee enquired of Bhagawaan Ji why Nila Bub had gone on jabbing him with his elbow. The Bhagawaan replied, 'If one becomes succssful in the spiritual field, the other aspirants grow jealous of one.'

3. The Jwaalaa-Mukhi Shrine at Khrew.

The Shrine is situated about sixteen miles south-east of Srinagar. There is a temple on a hillock, at the foot of which is a large spring in which the pilgrims bathe before going up to the temple. In his early life, Bhagawaan Ji used to visit the Shrine for three or four days every year.

Once, during the period 1937-47, he visited the Shrine along with his elder sister and some devotees. At the meal time, he asked about fifty people to sit for meals. His sister was alarmed, as the cooking vessel contained cooked rice sufficient for five to seven people only. How could such a large number of people be fed? But he told her to keep the *degchi* (the rice-cooking vessel) covered, after she had taken cooked rice out of it on each occasion. To the amazement of all, the vessel supplied cooked rice for all the fifty invitees, and still there was a surplus of a little quantity.

4. The Bhadra-Kaali Shrine.

After having spent some time at Kshirbhavaani in 1962, Bhagawaan Ji went to Bhadra Kaali, a shrine in a forest in the Handwaaraa Tehsil about fifty-five miles to the north of Srinagar. He started his *dhooni* in an open piece of land below the Shrine. He asked all his devotees (except his sister and Swaami Amritaananda) to go back, telling them that they would, otherwise, be blown away by the gusts of wind (meaning the waves of spiritual disturbance) blowing from the north, i.e., the Tibet side. Soon after, the Chinese invasion followed.

5. The Jyeshthaa-Bhagawati Shrine.

This Shrine is situated near what is known as the Gulaab Bhavan Palace, about three miles from the city proper. Bhagawaan Ji would ,occasionally, visit the Shrine, spending two or three nights there on each occasion. One winter, while it was snowing, he, along with a devotee, left for the Shrine at about 10 p.m. A

barbed wire had been put up across the road to the Shrine under orders of the late Mahaaraaja Hari Singh, so that the short cut to the Shrine had been blocked. Bhagawaan Ji and the devotee had to crawl in under the barbed wire, and the former remarked that the Maharaajaa would have to quit. A few years later, in 1947, the Maharaja had to leave Kashmir.

At the shrine, the devotee implored Bhagawaan Ji to grace him with a vision of Jyeshthaa Bhagawati. At about 4 a.m., while they were reciting Chapter IV of the *Panchastavi*, Bhagawaan Ji asked the devotee to stand up and look towards the Bhagawati's holy spring. The devotee found an excessively bright light, as though of many suns, coming from the spring. Bhagawaan Ji immediately asked the devotee to sit down or he would become blind.

The offerings made at the Shrine are partly non-vegetarian; e.g., boiled rice, seasoned with turmeric powder to make it yellow, and a sheep-liver preparation. Some party had brought such an offering to the Shrine. After performing *poojaa*, they gave a protion of this as *prashaad* to Bhagawaan Ji and many others. Just then, a *saadhu* came to the Shrine. He began to speak ill of all present there for offering, and taking meat at the Shrine. Bhagawaan Ji was benign and never troubled anybody, but this time he got very angry and cursed the *saadhu*, saying, 'May small pox afflict you *(Peyinay shutali-bood)*'. An hour later, the *saadhu* got fever and, a few hours later, small pox appeared on the whole of his body. The *saadhu*, then, repented and begged Bhagawaan Ji's pardon. The latter asked him to leave the Shrine immediately but comforted him saying that he would get well within a few days.

6. Guptagangaa

This shrine is situated about nine miles from Srinagar and is near Nishat Baagh. During the year 1949 AD,

Bhagawaan Ji spent about nine months at this shrine. Normally, he would spend about two or three days there every year. But on this occasion, he spent much time there. He blew regularly into his *dhooni* which was fed with big wooden logs. Raadhaa Devi, a well-known woman saint, came to this place to meet him. The details of what transpired at their meeting are given in chapter XI.

7. Tushkaraaja Bhairava Shrine at Narsingh Garh, Srinagar.

Bhagawaan Ji would stay at this shrine for two or three days every year. This place has been an abode of great saints and, as such, is hallowed. He liked this place very much and said that this was a place where a spiritual aspirant should live. Probably, it has suitable vibrations for spiritual development.

8. The Amarnath Pilgrimage.

During the year 1946 AD, Bhagawaan Ji went on a pilgrimage to Shri Amarnath Ji Cave along with a number of devotees and his elder sister (thirteen people in all). The party left by bus for Pahalgam, a famous health resort, from where ponies were engaged to carry the party along the mountain track to the sacred Cave. But Bhagawaan Ji did not ride the pony allotted to him at all. He forbade his sister also to ride a pony, but she disobeyed and fell off after only a little distance. Subsequently, she, too, proceeded to the Cave and back on foot.

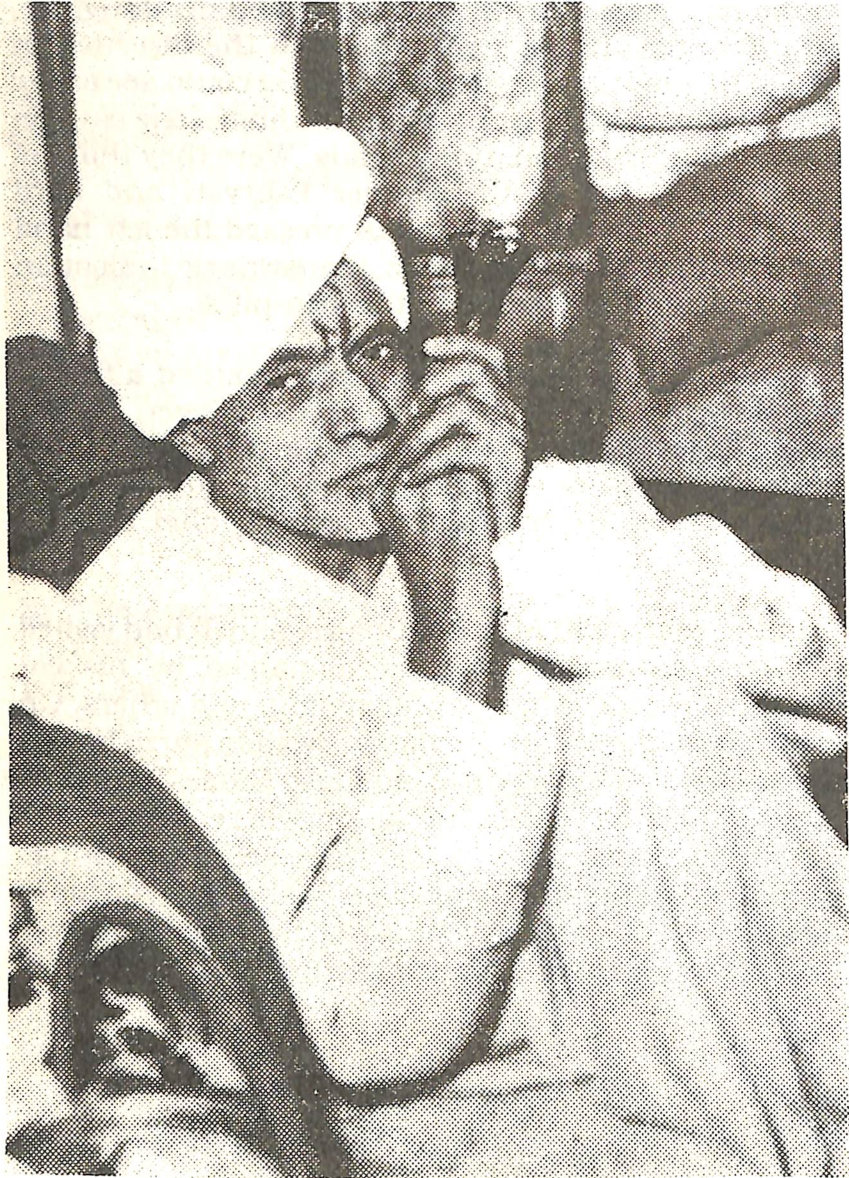
*'On the day of the *darshana*, the party had a dip in the ice-cold water of the Amaraavati and proceeded up the stairs towards the holy cave. Three of them—Bhagawaan Ji, Shri Bhola Nath and Mrs [Prabhaavati] Handoo—did not go up, but stood below the stairs, at Bhagawaan Ji's behest. Bhagawaan Ji took the customary coconut offering to Lord Shiva in his right hand. Withdrawing the hand inside his *pheran*, he put the

coconut near his left armpit, pressing it in place with the arm. He was steadily gazing towards the icy *lingam* in the holy cave. Shri Bhola Nath asked his daughter, Mrs [Prabhavati] Handoo, to look in the direction in which Bhagawaan Ji was looking. She could see above the icy *lingam* and just below the ceiling of the cave on a shelf-like formation, three heads. Were they those of Lord Shiva, the Divine Mother Paarvati and Lord Ganesha? When Bhagawaan Ji pressed the left hand out through the *pheran* sleeve, there was no indication of the coconut still being in the arm-pit'.#

On the return journey, the party boarded a bus at Pahalgam for Srinagar. At Achhabal, however, Bhagawaan Ji, accompanied by another devotee, Shri Bholanath, got down and proceeded on foot to visit some other shrines. He returned to Srinagar after about a month.

In the year 1936 AD also, Bhagawaan Ji had visited the holy Amarnath Cave, accompanied by his co-disciple, Swaami Aftab Joo Waangnu, and others. On return from the shrine, he visited Swaami Mirza Kaak's *samaadhi* at Haangalgund, and also Umaa Ji (Braariaangan), sacred to Umaa Shankar where, besides the main Umaa-Shankara spring, there are other springs sacred to Brahmaa. Vishnu and Rudra. The shrine is now (ie in the early seventies) being renovated by a young Swaami, Shri Swayamaananda Ji.

Mrs Kusum Handoo: 'Some Miracles of Bhagawaan Ji' *(The BGT Patrikaa, Vol IV, No. 1)*
This was related by Mrs Prabhaavati Handoo to the writer of the article. —Ed.



Bhagawaan Ji with the *chillum*.

Chapter VI

DAILY ROUTINE

At various places in Srinagar or while on his visits to various shrines outside Srinagar, Bhagawaan Ji sat on his *aasana* all the 24 hours, deeply absorbed in the Supreme. When he lived at Dalhasanyaar, Srinagar (1937-47 AD), he had his *aasana* on the second floor of the building at a window overlooking a street. At Reshi Mohalla (1947-57 AD) and Chondapora (1957-68 AD), his *aasana* was on the first floor. While at Dalhasanyaar and Reshi Mohalla, he went out to visit various shrines. He did not move out of his Chondapora residence except on very few occasions. One thing, however, is certain: during the last seven years of his life, he did not leave his *aasana* at all. During the last two years he did not leave it even to answer the calls of nature. His was a state, in this respect, known as *Aasana-Jaya.*

Every morning, he would wash his face and *yajnopavit* at a water-tap, and resume his seat on his *aasana* which he would not leave till the next morning or, sometimes, for 48 hours, not even to make water. Seated on his *aasana*, he would tie his turban and put on a saffron *tilak* with a touch of ash at the centre. He would next start his *dhooni* (sacred fire). The receptacle used for it was an iron *sigdi*, about a foot and a half in diameter. This was placed on a rectangular slab of stone or in a big round tray. He would sometimes use the outer iron tray only for his *dhooni*, if the occasion so demanded. Fire-wood was used as the fuel for the *dhooni*. After offering some oblations into the *dhooni*, he would fill his *chillum* and start smoking. The *dhooni* ' would be kept burning from morning till evening with *aahuties* put into it off and on. The *aahuties* consisted

of *shakkar* (sugar, brown in colour), rice, barley, dry fruits, flowers of various sorts, Mentha leaves (mint), skimmia leaves, *bhel patri* etc. With eyes glued towards the sky, he would take intermittent puffs at his *chillum.* Live coals and cinders would sometimes fall off from his *chillum* on his *phiran* or on his *aasana* and burn holes in them. But his deep absorption left him unaware of it. He would remove the live coals and cinders only after he had finished his smoking, and extinguish the fire in the burning clothes by sprinkling a few drops of water on it. One could see several gaping holes in his *phiran* which he would not care to get mended.

On certain rare occasions, he would fill the big iron tray of his *dhooni* with tobacco, sprinkle a layer of turmeric over it, and spread over the whole layers of sugar, and rice-maize-and wheat flour. Then he would set fire to it. This fire would continue for two or three days till everything was consumed. During this period, he would eat very little, if anything, and remain absorbed, puffing at his *chillum.* He did not allow anybody to touch this *dhooni* even to poke the fire. All this struck me as rather extraordinary. Once, I picked up courage to enquire of him what all that was about. He said that that was done to propitiate *Mahaakaala* (the god of death) to save somebody's life. During the last ten years of his life, he repeated that process on four or five occasions only.

Personal Hygiene

During the last thirty years of his life, Bhagawaanji appears to have taken a bath only twice. He once bathed at Kshir Bhawaani where pilgims bathe before offering, *pooja*, and then again in his last residential place at Chondapora when the Dal Lake was frozen one very severe winter. Soon after he had bathed, there was a thaw and the cold wave, which had been sweeping through the Valley, abated. He did not bathe generally as he did not look upon the body as we do, Once, when

I was pressing his legs, he told me that they were splinters of wood. But even though he did not bathe usually, his skin gave out an aroma.

Bhagawaan Ji got his head shaved clean once every month. His devotees used to massage his body with oil, but, some years before he gave up the gross body, he discontinued this practice, stating that there was enough oil in his skin. He would never take a bath after the massage. He however, advised some people to have an oil massage after their bath to cure them of some physical ailments.

Dress

Before 1925, Bhagawaan Ji wore good quality *pashmina phirans* and shoes of a sophisticated design. The year 1925 marks a turning point in this respect. Since then, he seems to have lost interest in what he wore. When his sister and devotees insisted, he changed his clothes once a week or even after a fortnight.

In later years, he used a shirt, a waist-coat and a *phiran* and *potshoo* (an inner *phiran* of cotton cloth). The *phiran* used in winter was woollen and in summer of dyed linen. In winter, he used, besides, a woollen blanket and *kangri* (fire pot) under his *phiran*.

Food

At about 9 a.m., he took a cup of tea (known as *kahva* in Kashmiri) prepared from dried green tea leaves and sugar only, without milk. At 1 p.m., he took his lunch of rice, vegetables etc., but his sister had to remind him many a time before he could be persuaded to take this meal. He would sometimes miss it on the pretext that it was too early in the day, or too late to have it. In the afternoon, he took another cup of *kahva* or of tea with milk and salt (called *shirchai* in Kashmiri). He would, on rare occasions, take a piece of bread with his *kahva* or *shirchai*. Sometimes, he took only one rice meal or

some milk in the evening. Eight months before giving up the gross body, he stopped even taking this one meal a day. After great persuasion, he took rice meals on only four occasions during those months. He did not show any interest in sweets or other tasty foods, though he seemed to like peaches.

Even while taking his meals or tea, he did not seem to pay much attention to what he was taking, and continued to be absorbed in the Infinite. Hot Kashmiri tea is served in a bornze cup known as a *khos* which is held with a towel. On occasions, the cup, full of tea, would remain in his hand for an hour or so, after which he would seem to 'wake up', and either finish it in a draught, though it had cooled, or simply throw it away.

Drinks

Whatever was offered to Bhagawaan Ji was accepted; some people would offer him brandy, whisky or other alcoholic preparations. He would distribute small dozes of these to the assembled devotees, and empty the rest of the bottle himself. While drinking, his physical frame would shake, giving those present the impression that he was shaking off the sheaths of the *antahkarnas (Chit, Buddhi, Manas* and *Ahankaara*) that envelop the *Jivaatman.* Then he would fall into some sort of *samaadhi* for two or three hours, or more. This state was interrupted by short periods when he would smoke his *chillum.* He would not touch food for many hours after he had had a drink.

Fasts

Bhagawaan Ji used to observe fasts very often, sometimes for a month, three months or even six months. His fast was not of the ceremonial type where one misses a meal a day or observes other formalities, but total abstinence from food except for a cup of tea on rare occasions.

At the Shaarikaa Bhagawati Shrine (Haari Parbat), he lived at the house of one Pandit Ram Joo, a priest. On one occasion, he observed a continuous fast for 33 days. He grew very weak, so much so that one day, while trying to stand up, he fell down face downwards, but this did not deter him from continuing the fast. He was a saint with great *purushaartha.* However difficult the aim, nothing would deter him from trying to achieve it. On one occasion, he had not taken anything for three days when one Pt Gwash Ram implored him to take food. He said petulantly in my presence, 'Where are you born today (to proffer such advice)? I have not taken meals for six months on end.' It is a known fact that those on the path of spiritual advancement take little food. It is likely that he resorted to frequent fasts to conquer hunger. He once told a devotee, whom he wanted to elevate, 'One should not eat when one feels the pangs of hunger, but feed it (the body) when it does not ask for it.'

Fasting did not in any way affect the pursuit of Bhagawaan Ji's ideal but he appeared to be mentally more alert during fasts, though his body showed great strain; his lips foamed, his mouth got parched and his tongue had a white coating. His *chillum* was, more or less, his constant companion during these days. Implored by his devotees to take some food, he would say that by smoking his *chillum,* he got enough nourishment.

Chapter VII

ATTITUDE TO MARRIAGE AND SEX

Though Bhagawaan Ji's parents and some other relatives pressed him to marry, he spurned their advice. They had speculated that, if he got married, he would take to a householder's life, and be a bread-winner for his family, but this proved only a dream.

Bhagawaan Ji was a born *brahmachaari* (celebate) and remained a celebate throughout his life. He must have cultivated this virtue during the course of many previous births. That alone can explain his remaining unaffected by this powerful natural urge, to which even some saints have been seen to succumb.

Just as Shri Ramakrishna Parmahansa advised people to shun *kaamini* and *kanchan* (lust and greed), Bhagawaan Ji would say 'Where is the way for spiritual advancement so long as there is lust?'

At twenty, Bhagawaan Ji's ways were becoming visibly godly. Some of his class-mate companions, in order to test him, took him to a house of ill fame, which they visited to satisfy their carnal desires. They went to the woman's room by turns. Bhagawaan Ji's turn came last of all. He went into her room and found her lying in a compromising position. Addressing her as a witch, he bade her stand up, administered her a rebuke and advised her to give up her sinful ways. Then he flung a rupee coin at her and left the room. He felt that it was all bliss. His companions had found bliss in illicit sex indulgence while he had found it in abstinence. This fact was revealed by Bhagawaan Ji to his companions

the very next day, and he pitied their lot and that of the woman.

Some saints do not allow others to touch them but Bhagawaan Ji was different. He allowed anybody (who offered to do so) to press his feet or legs, and repeatedly said that his legs were mere splinters of wood.

Once, when I was indisposed and pressing his legs and feet, he said, 'Have you thrown your senelity on to me?' Normally, saints do not allow people to touch them as, thereby, the taints or ailments of the latter are transferred to them. But Bhagawaan Ji was an ocean of grace and such things did not affect him at all; instead, he allowed people to get solace by pressing his legs or feet.

While he lived at Rishi Mohalla (1947-57), a lady once came to his place. As soon as she took her seat, he started beating her with an iron pincer. As she took to flight, he followed her to the compound and also to the lane just outside the house. As he had never before shown such anger on any occasion, all sitting in his room were surprised. After he had taken his seat, he explained, on his own, that the unchaste lady had visited two friends that morning, and then she had come to him, steeped in the sin.

Once, a group of five women from outside Kashmir came to see Bhagawaan Ji, and he remarked, 'They live by prostitution. *This is Kaliyuga*' Once, a man fell for the blandishments of a widow, and was planning to meet her. He went to see Bhagawaan Ji. As soon as he was seated before him, he (Bhagawaan Ji) spoke out this, to all present: 'A drop of semen will produce fire all around. Why go in for such a folly?' The man understood that, if the widow conceived, the news would spread like wild fire to the great detriment of them both. The conception might result in abortion or the death of

the baby, if born, by any other means. The man shuddered. This was Bhagawaan Ji's method of bringing people to the path of righteousness. Once, another man fell for the shapely legs of a lady, began to follow her and started trying to meet her. When he went to see Bhagawaan Ji, the latter told him, 'What is the charm in fine legs? The whole body is food for *Mahaakaala* (the god of death)'.

Chapter VIII

PHILANTHROPIC NATURE

Bhagawaan Ji was an ocean of power and helped those who called on him to advance on the path of spirituality, and also those who came to see him for the fulfilment of their worldly ambitions, the removal of their physical maladies or the solution of other problems. Besides, he would help the deserving monetarily as well.

He would pay multitudes of *sadhus* Re 1/- each, on as many occasions as they called. Why he did so became clear to me one day when I was a witness to the following incident.

Once, I happened to see Bhagawaan Ji's sister on the ground floor of the building where he lived those days. She was complaining bitterly that he gave away all the money to *saadhus*, leaving very little to meet the needs of the household. I seemed to agree that Bhagawaan Ji should not be indifferent to the financial needs of the household. I went upstairs to Bhagawaan Ji's room. As soon as I paid my obeisance and was seated before him, he said, 'These poor *gosaains* (*saadhus*) have only the earth to sit on, with the open sky as the roof over their heads, and they are naked and starving.' I was abashed. Some of these *saadhus* said that, after they had got a rupee from him, other avenues opened for them automatically.

A few other instances of his munificence may also be cited:

(a) Pandit Dina Nath was the priest of the family with whom Bhagawaan Ji lived during 1957-68. The

priest was very poor and had three daughters, two of them married and the third of a marriageable age. One day, along with the unmarried daughter, he paid obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji. He placed his pass-book, with a balance of Rs. 500/- only, before him and told him that he would poison either himself or his daughter, as he had no where withal to marry her off. Bhagawaan Ji was visibly moved. He told the gentleman to come again after two days, on the *Somavati Amaavasyaa* day, early in the morning. He was to knock thrice at the closed door of Bhagawaan Ji's room (which used to be unlocked). In case the door did not open at the third knock, he was to return home. But as soon as the priest knocked the third time, Bhagawaan Ji himself opened it and then resumed his seat on the *aasana*. He gave the priest *charanamrita* (holy water), that was lying there on a lotus petal, to drink thrice. The priest says that it appeared that there was only a single drop on the lotus petal, which appeared to get divided into three parts. Bhagawaan Ji then predicted that his daughter would be married in the next six months and that thenceforth his pockets would never be empty. After he had fixed the date of his daughter's marriage, this gentleman came again to see Bhagawaan Ji who gave him Rs. 200/- and told him not to worry as he would get the funds necessary for performing the marriage. He received help also from some other people, in cash as well as in kind, and was thus able to celebrate the marriage of his daughter comfortably, in about six months. The gentleman met me recently and confided that, since his above-mentioned meeting with Bhagawaan Ji, his pockets had never been empty. The question that naturally arises is that, if his poverty was a result of his past *karmas*, how did Bhagawaan Ji manage to help him?

(b) Bhagawaan Ji stayed at Kshirbhavaani for some months during the year 1961. Once, when only two people, Pt Dina Nath Ticku and Swami Amritaananda

(both his disciples), were present in his hut, a lady came and whispered in a low voice to Bhagawaan Ji that the date for her daughter's marriage was only ten days away. The money-lender, who had promised to lend her the required amount, had backed out. In a fix, she did not know what to do. Bhagawaan Ji immediately emptied the contents of his cloth purse, which contained Rs 60/-, in the lady's hand. He also beckoned to Mr Ticku to give her some money. The latter gave her Rs. 600/- from his Post Office Savings account. Bhagawaan Ji left the Shrine a few days later for Srinagar. After the girl's marriage, the lady went to Srinagar and offered to Bhagawaan Ji the *prashaada* of the marriage *yajna*. He told her, 'Why did you get the *naivedya* for me? I was present at the ceremony.' Bhagawaan Ji must have been there in his astral body as he was in Srinagar on that day.



Bhagawaan Ji, a close-up.

Chapter IX

'DARSHANA' TO PEOPLE

From 1947 AD onwards to the day he gave up the gross body, a large number of people of diverse creeds used to come to Bhagawaan Ji's place, wherever he might be living, for his *darshana* everyday, from early morning till late in the night. He was accessible to all. The room at Chondapora (20'x12'), where he lived for the last eleven years of his life, was always full of people. Quite often, the room overflowed with people, some of whom had to accommodate themselves outside on the stairs. People of all kinds of faith and opinion held him in high esteem and felt peace in his presence, forgetting their woes and worries. As already reported, he was an introvert, talked very little and remained always absorbed in communion with the Infinite. He would generally reply to questions indirectly and seldom directly, even without people expressing themselves openly. He was very compassionate and helped all those in trouble. If requested, he gave them a little of the ashes from his *dhooni* to cure them of their ailments. He is known to have cured blood cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, internal haemorrhages and brain disorders by his spiritual power. He sometimes asked those afflicted with malignant diseases to be brought to him. The patients, who were fortunate enough to come to him, got cured completely, to the surprise of all. Bhagawaan Ji never asked anybody for money or anything else, but people on their own offered him money, fruits, flowers, rice, sugar and sweets. He never refused to accept whatever was offered but distributed it among those present. Once, he told me (pointing towards the fruits, sweets, etc. lying before him), 'This is all blood.' But he took the evil attached to

such offerings upon himself, and distributed them as *prashaada*, duly sanctified by his touch.

Bhagawaan Ji was sometimes offered currency notes of Rupees hundred, ten, five or two denominations. He got these exchanged for one-rupee notes. This money he would distribute among the *saadhus* who came to Kashmir for the Amarnath Yatra or just to spend the summer in the Valley. The *saadhus* living in Kashmir also came to him. On each occasion he would give each *saadhu* Re. 1/- only. If a *saadhu* pressed for more, he would send him away unceremoniously. Thousands of *saadhus* normally come to Kashmir every year and no day would pass without *saadhus* calling for *dakshinaa*. Sometimes, more than a hundred *saadhus* would call on a single day before the Amarnath Ji Yatra in the month of Saawan (July-August). He would offer his *chillum* to some of them. Even on 20th of May, 1968, the day of his passing away, he paid three *saadhus* Re. 1/- each.

During the last few years of his life, a large number of small children would call on him. He gave them toffees or something else suitable that was handy. He, however, gave priority to putting *aahuties* into his *dhooni*.

A large number of students also would come and entreat him for help in passing their examinations.

Bhagawaan Ji would chase away ill-charactered people, beating them with the iron spoon with which he offered *aahuties* into his *dhooni*, or with iron pincers. But none of them suffered any serious injury. On some occasions, without any apparent cause, he became very cross and everyone present shuddered. But after a few moments, he would be his genial self again and smile (he was never seen laughing). He subsequently gave *prashaada* even to those who had suffered a

beating at his hands. He treated saints and the devotees of God with great reverence. About some *saadhus* he would say that they were merely jugglers; he nevertheless gave them a *dakshinaa* of a rupee each.

Chapter X

'SAADHANAA'

For a layman, it is difficult to write about the *saadhanaa* of a great saint who has attained the highest spiriutal state. K.M. Munshi and R.R. Diwakar, the biographers of Mahayogi Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, quote him as saying, 'It is impossible to write any biography; moreover, there is no meaning in the writing of the biographies of poets, philosophers and yogis. The reason is that they do not live in their outer actions which are visible to people.' They go on to say, 'Now he is no more amongst us and we have to be satisfied with whatever little we can have from stray hints he and his closest associates have left behind.'

For writing a biography of Bhagawaan Ji, the only material we have is Bhagawaan Ji's occasional utterances, hints and suggestions picked up by me during my contact with him ranging over two decades, and also by other devotees with long personal contacts with him; their information is very useful and authentic at the same time.

Nobody dared disturb Bhagawaan Ji when he was smoking his *chillum* with eyes transfixed towards the sky. He would come down to our plane of consciousness if questioned, but return to his state of infinite bliss immediately after.

For the sake of convenience, we shall speak about Bhagawaan Ji's *saadhanaa* and the related matters during each of the following periods separately:-

(a) The period from 1908 to 1924 AD

(b) The period from 1924 to 1930 AD

(c) The period from 1930 to 1937 AD
(d) The period from 1937 to 1947 AD
(e) The period from 1947 to 1957 AD
(f) The period from 1957 to 1968 AD

(a) The period 1908 to 1924 AD

Fortunately, we have in our possession certain prayers in the Devanaagri, Shaaradaa and Persian scripts copied by Bhagawaan Ji himself. From the information gathered from them and some other sources, we can have some insight into his early *saadhanaa*.

As has been mentioned already, since his earliest boyhood he had been reciting from memory hymns like the *Panchastavi*, the *Bhavaani-Sahasranaama*, the *Saundarya Lahiri*, the *Vishnu-Sahasranaama*, the *Shiva Mahimnastotram*, the *Utpalastotraavali*, the *Bhagavad-gitaa* and the *Guru Gitaa*, besides the *Vaaks* of some Kashmiri saints. He showed great interest in devotional songs and music, and in *Raslilas*, which he organized himself. He was lost in ecstasy on these occasions.

From 1920 onwards, he started having a daily *parikramaa* round the sacred hillock of Haari Parvat on which, besides other shrines, is situated the holy shrine of the Divine Mother in the form of Shri Shaarika Bhagavati. He would sit in the Devi-aangan, a plain ground at the foot of the hillock, in a hut open on all sides, smoking his *chillum*. He remained absorbed thus for many hours before returning home. While running the grocer's shop, (which he gave up in about 1925 AD) one evening he put up the wooden planks of the shop that served as the shutter, but neither bolted nor locked the shutter; he confided to a companion, 'Let us see whether the widow (meaning the Divine Mother Shaarika Bhagawati) really exists.' Then both left for the Haari Parvat Shrine. (It is only a great devotee, regarding the Divine Mother as his Real Mother,

who can use for her the seemingly irreverent word 'widow.') At about 11 p.m., the owner of the premises happened to come out on the street. He was bewildered to see the shop unlocked and apprehended a burglary. He mounted guard at the shop for the night, sitting on the wooden platform attached to it. In the morning, Bhagawaan Ji and his companion returned from Haari Parvat and the owner of the house chided them for their negligence. Bhagawaan Ji, however, did not heed the childing and opened the shop.

The hymns in Bhagawaan Ji's own handwriting lying at the Ashram are:-

1) A hymn to Mahaganesha
2) A hymn to the Divine Mother
3) A hymn to Lord Naaraayana
4) A hymn to Lord Shiva
5) A hymn to the Guru

There are also the following in Bhagawaan Ji's own hand:-

(1) An *Omkaara* in Shaarada, double-lined, round which 'Raama Raama' is written; the space between the two lines is blank.

(2) A double-lined *Omkaara* in Shaarada round which 'Shiva Shiva' is written; the space round the two lines is blank. Over this *Omkaara* is a prayer to the Guru.

(3) A *taantric mantra* in two lines in the Shaarda script.

These and other details show that Bhagawaan Ji practised the ancient *Sanaatana Panchaanga Upaasanaa* to begin with. This pertains to the period when he resided in Shri Ram Joo Paarimoo's house and Shri Keshav Joo Dhar's house i.e. 1914-24 and when his age was between 16 and 26 years. It appears that

Bhagawaan Ji had a vision of the Divine Mother, Shaarika Bhagawati, during the latter part of this period. She was his tutelary goddess *(Ishta Devi)* also.

Just as Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa started with the worship of the Divine Mother Mahaakaali and had her vision, and then began his search for the other realms of spirituality, so was the case with Bhagawaan Ji, too.

(b) The period 1924-1930

During this period, in Pt Dina Nath Bhotta's house at Rangteng, Srinagar, Bhagawaan Ji lost his father. While here, he is said to have observed silence, but he was not a total recluse as he attended to family matters at times, and to the marriage of his younger sister also.

(c) The period 1930-1937

In 1930, Bhagawaan Ji had to shift to the house of Pandit Tika Lal at Rangteng, Srinagar. At this place, he appears to have plunged headlong into intense *saadhanaa.* He would be found lying on a bed, face towards the wall, with a small lamp burning in his room all the 24 hours. His elder sister told me that during this period nobody was allowed to get into his room except her younger daughter, Chaandaa Ji, and a few other selected people. The room and Bhagawaan Ji's bed were covered with layers of dust which he would not allow to be swept away. Cob-webs and spiders also were there. During this period, a rat nibbled a hole in one of his heels and the hole continued to be there for a long time. He would sometimes take handfuls of *Datura* (Stramonium) seeds, opium, *paanak* and other intoxicants during this period of intense *saadhanaa.*

At times, Bhagawaan Ji would vomit basinfuls of blood and his body was wholly swollen. On one occasion, during this period, his sister reminded him of the intense financial suffering they were undergoing and

suggested to him to take to a worldly life. His reply, firm and direct, was 'Our boat is in the midst of an ocean; either both of us will land safely or get drowned.'

During this period, he would fast for months together or sometimes take huge quantities of food. This *tapasyaa*, lasted seven years and he came out of this great ordeal clairvoyant and clairaudient, with a full vision of the past, the present and the future, a *siddha* with a badly mauled body but a radiant soul. This appears to be the period when he had the *saakshaatkaara*# of Paramaatman or Shiva.

(d) The period 1937-47

In 1937, along with his sister, Devamaali Ji, and his elder brother, Gobind Joo, he moved to the house of Pt Nila Kaul Saraf at Dalhasanyar, Srinagar. They had a separate building over-looking a bazaar. He had his *aasana* (seat) on the second floor of the building near a window from where the Hari Parvat and the Shankaracharya hill shrines were in clear view. He would smoke his *chillum* and keep talking to invisible people. He was, sometimes, seen instructing people invisible to ordinary persons like us. While he did not speak well of Mahaaraaja Hari Singh, the then ruler of Kashmir, he was appreciative of Yuvaraj Karan Singh. It was clear now that he was taking an interest in his environment. People started coming to him for his *darshana*, for the cure of their ailments, for getting some employment or for some other forms of worldly advancement. He would help them. Here, too, he was always absorbed in the Self and had to be awakened, so to say, to attend to the people sitting around him. After a brief reply, he would again get into *samaadhi*. At times, he would not respond to the people addressing him. On some days, he would go to Haari Parvat and return after a few hours, or go to other shrines.

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i.e. seeing face to face

A Sikh saint had come from outside the State to see Bhagawaan Ji. He remained with him for about three months, got thoroughly initiated and left Kashmir quite satisfied. There was a devotee of Shri Shaarika Bhagawati, Pt Maheshwar Nath Zutshi of Mallapora, Srinagar. He was a man of dispassion. He husked paddy himself to prepare the rice for his own use. He said that he had received instructions from Shri Shaarika Bhagawati to see Bhagawaan Ji and get initiated by him. Bhagawaan Ji received the devotee well and offered him a meal, a drink and his own *chillum* to smoke after he had smoked it himself. That was all. The devotee became a *siddha*. He died only a few years after initiation.

During this period, he would, at intervals, go to the Kshirbhavaani shrine also, where he would spend some days or months. The usual practice is to take a bath in a running stream within the precincts of the shrine before performing the *pooja* at the holy spring. He did not observe this ritual but would go directly to a hut on the premises of the shrine.

On very rare occasions, he would offer flowers or milk at the shrine. It is, therefore, likely that he used to go to various shrines as he found there the vibrations suitable for his own *kriyaa* (spiritual discipline) and not to worship any particular deity at a shrine.

During this period, he started the practice of blowing at live charcoals in his *kaangri* (fire-pot) for hours at a time. He would, occasionally, put oblations into this fire in small quantities. This, presumably, was to gain mastery over the *Agni-Tattwa* (the element of fire) and/or, through it, of the other *tattwas* (elements of Nature).

Bhagawaan Ji's elder brother passed away in 1946. Till then, he had looked to all the requirements of Bhagawaan Ji. On the day his brother passed away, he left for Kshir Bhavaani early in the morning and in the

afternoon got his right arm bandaged there, on the plea that it had been fractured. That was at the moment his brother had just breathed his last in Srinagar. He got the bandage removed on the 10th *kriyaa* day of the deceased. This shows the extent of his detachment at that time.

(e) The period between 1947-1957 AD.

Bhagawaan Ji, along with his sister, moved to the house of Pt Maadhava Joo Sathu, to whom his sister's daughter, Chaandaa Ji, was married, in the beginning of the year 1947. Here, too, he continued his spiritual practices, with his *chillum* as his constant companion. At this place, his miracles were often noted. He started offering regularly oblations in his fire-pot (*kaangdi*), which is commonly used by people to keep warm in the Kashmir winter. He kept on blowing at the fire for hours together. It was now clear that he was emitting vibrations from the various parts of his body — his shoulders, knees etc. He would sometimes raise his shoulder or some other part of his body, and it seemed that he was reacting to some vibrations received by him. This action can readily be understood by those who have some knowledge of Sufism.

During this period, he would often go to various shrines. A very interesting episode of this period may be mentioned to show how clairvoyant he had become. A saintly person used to visit a *Shaivaachaarya* as well as Bhagawaan Ji. This person once went to visit the *Aachaarya*, After some time, he wished to leave and the *Aachaarya* asked him why he was in such a haste to go. On being informed that he wanted to see Bhagawaan Ji, the Aacharya, boasting of his scholarship, said, 'Since when have you started bowing to lumps of muck'? But this observation did not weaken the man's resolve to go to see Bhagawaan Ji. As soon as he took his seat before Bhagawaan Ji, the latter told him, 'Why

do you come to bow before lumps of muck? We are not chiselled scholars.' How well has it been said that it is the unsophisticated without much learning that shall be saved, rather than those whose egoes have been inflated by erudition!

During this period, Bhagawaan Ji's birthday used to be celebrated on a large scale. More than five hundred people would be served each with a rice meal. Bhagawaan Ji's family priest would come, perform *poojaa* and sanctify the yellow rice prepared for the occasion, but he (Bhagawaan Ji) seemed to participate in all this mechanically, and would, off and on, offer *aahuties* into his *dhooni* at the time of the *poojaa* even; he probably submitted to the family priest in order to keep alive the tradition. Musical performances, with the *santoor* and some other musical instruments being played, were very common on this day and would continue till the early hours of the next morning. He would put a vermilion mark between the eye-brows of all those who called on this day. He also gave them the *prashaada* of sugar candy and a pinch of ashes each from his *dhooni*. He was very gracious on that day and all smiles.

During this period, he had a number of devotees. He initiated a devotee by a mere look or by sharing his *chillum* with him, and very rarely by word of mouth. In fact, all those who came for spiritual advancement received his grace according to their capacity and leanings.

(f) The period 1957-68 AD

Bhagawaan Ji's sister's son-in-law died in 1957 and the deceased's younger daughter, Kishni Ji, approached Bhagawaan Ji to say that they were now feeling lonely and miserable and that there was none to look after them, their mother, too, having died earlier. Straightaway, seizing his *chillum* and a woollen blanket, he

moved to their house at Chondapora, Srinagar, accompanied by his elder sister. He continued to live there till he gave up the gross body on 28th May, 1968.

On going to that house, Bhagawaan Ji started his *dhooni* in an iron *sigdi*. He kept it burning from morning till evening every day. At this place also, he would continuously blow at live coals for hours together. Again, at this place, he got a round, wide-mouthed earthenware vessel and filled it with water; he placed a brass basin over it with a metal tumbler inside. both of which he also filled with water. He was seen concentrating upon it with a fixed gaze, as if watching the water vapour or something luminous, which we cannot see ordinarily, rising from the tumbler. It is clear that he was dealing with the *Jala Tattwa* (the element of Water). He seems to have been dealing with the *Vaayu* and *Aakaasha Tattwas* (the elements of Air and Ether) by smoking his *chillum* in a rythmic way, and emitting vibrations towards the *Aakaasha* (the sky).

Normally, we can see the three *sthula* (gross) *tattwas*, viz. the earth, water and fire, and only feel the *Vaayu Tattwa*; but the remaining four *sukshama* (subtle) *tattwas viz*, *Aakaasha*, *Manas*, *Buddhi* and *Ahankaara*, cannot be experienced by our five sense organs. These can be experienced only by those whose intuitional eye (*jnaana netra*) has opened; they can see the colours, the form, and the actions of those *tattwas* as well.

The mastery over the *tattwas* is believed to have given Bhagawaan Ji supernatural powers to cure the otherwise incurable diseases,and regenerate the worn-out organs of a human body.

He was a *trikaala-drashtaa*, one who clearly sees the past, the present and the future. One example of how clearly he could foretell the future is given below:

One Mr Kantha Joo Peshin who was a God-fearing man and used to visit Bhagawaan Ji often, fell ill. He sent a man to Bhagawaan Ji to tell him that the former knew that he (Kanth Joo) was to die soon, but he wanted to know the exact time and date of his death. Bhagawaan Ji told the messenger that Mr Peshin would die on the following Wednesday at 4 p.m. And he passed away on that day exactly at 4 p.m.

Some of the spiritually-advanced *saadhus* who came frequently to have Bhagawaan Ji's *darshana*, said that he was a rare *siddha*. Others said he was at the *Avadhoota Avasthaa*. Still others said that he was a *sthita-prajna*, and there was another class to whom he was a *karma yogi*. He seemed indeed to combine the qualities of all these in himself.

During this period, musical concerts were held every Sunday afternoon, when the *santoor* was played and *sufiaana* songs were sung by Pt Vedh Lal Dar, Pt Badri Nath Kaul and others. Bhagawaan Ji seemed to enjoy the music immensely.

Chapter XI

LAST DAYS

The peculiarities in Bhagawaan Ji's behaviour during the last two years of his mortal existence were many and varied.

Bhagawaan Ji had usually a pillow behind him and one, about two feet high, on his right side, too. In front was his iron *sigdi* and the other paraphernalia of his *dhooni.* So he could stretch his legs on the left side only, if he wanted to lie down. Two years prior to his giving up the gross body, he got pillows fixed high up on his left side also, and there was, thus, no room for stretching his legs or lying down. The result was that his knees got so stiff, that he could not stand up; he was thus confined to his *aasana* seat. Somewhat similar advice had been given by him to a lady saint, Shrimati Raadhaa Devi (wife of Shri D.N. Raina), at Guptaganga, Srinagar. She first started criticising the vibrations Bhagawaan Ji was emitting from his *chillum* and the various parts of his body. (It is surprising that there can be such a difference among the actions of saints; she could not feel what the vibrations were about.) Bhagawaan Ji told her in a peremptory manner 'Go, break your knees' i.e. stop moving about and take to an *aasana* at one place. About a month after this incident, she locked herself up in her room and did not leave it until the time of her death a few years later. It is also said, but not confirmed, that she had placed fetters on her legs.

About two years before his giving up the gross body, Bhagawaan Ji sometimes remarked casually that he had grown old. This was an indirect hint that some great saints of Kashmir like Kh. Lassa Sahib and

Swaami Sona Kaak also gave before their departure from this world.

About a month and a half before his giving up the gross body, a devotee was sore to see Bhagawaan Ji's physical condition and thought that he might give up his body. Bhagawaan Ji, divining his thoughts, told him '*Amar chhaa maraan* ?' ('Does what is immortal die'?)

Shri S. D. Dhar recalls that a few days before Bhagawaan Ji's giving up the physical frame, he called at his place in the morning and found him physically very weak. After enquiring about his health, Bhagawaan Ji remarked, 'I should like to go to Kshirbhawaani now'.

A few months before his giving up the gross body, Bhagawaan Ji had a swelling in his genitals. I asked him why the swelling persisted. He said, 'What else is going to happen to this body? It will get shattered piece by piece'. On many occasions, previously, he had had swelling on his face, feet etc. and some had thought he was in his last days. But such swellings would miraculously disappear overnight to everyone's astonishment.

Whenever he had fever, he would take hot water boiled over his *dhooni*. On rear occasions, he would take a water decoction in which *Kahzabaan* (Macrotomia Benthami) leaves had been boiled over his *dhooni*. Before his giving up the physical body, some devotees requested him to take pills for free urination, but he refused straightaway. During the last thirty years of his life, he did not take any medicine.

Every year, Bhagawaan Ji would have cannabis (*bhang*) and some other aromatic plants brought to him and keep them boiling in water in iron trays for two or

three days; the boiled mixture was pounded and prepared into big balls, dried and then stored away. He would use these balls with toabacco for his *chillum*; the balls were not intoxicant. He regarded these as very sacred and whoever was allowed to help in their preparation was considered fortunate by him. During the last two years of his life, however, he did not order any leaves for the purpose.

Musicians sang before him every Sunday to the accompaniment of various instruments. They would stop late in the night, but he never in his life time asked any musician to stop. On Sunday, the 26th May, 1968, his last Sunday on Earth, however, he directed the musicians to stop, remarking:- 'We shall not listen to any more music.'

About a month before giving up the gross body, he remarked, 'The *dhooni* is not necessary now.' But, when his devotees requested him to be allowed to continue it, he did not object.

Chapter XII

GIVING UP THE GROSS BODY

Bhagawaan Ji gave up the gross body on 28th May, 1968 AD (corresponding to Jyeshta Shukla Dvitiyaa) at 5.45 p.m. Many people, who had intended to have his *darshana* on that day and about that time, including his younger sister (his elder sister having passed away in the year 1965) could not come, for this or that reason. This was probably so as he did not wish to be disturbed, while giving up his gross body. Only three people, including the present writer, were in his room at that time.

On that fateful morning, he, as usual, washed his face, tied his turban, put on a *tilak* and reclined on his left side. Some people had come to see him, though their exact number is not known. My youngest son, who had come from outside Kashmir, went to pay respects to him at about 2 p.m. Bhagawaan Ji blessed him, saying that he would pass the final Engineering Examination in the first division, would get a job soon after, and also be married outside Kashmir. Then he gave him an unusually large quantity of *prashaad*. The prophecy came true subsequently.

At about 3 p.m., three *saadhus* came and Bhagawaan Ji threw his cloth purse towards one of his devotees asking him to pay them Re. 1/- each. This was done. He then had a few puffs at his *chillum*, though he felt difficulty in smoking. A devotee, Shri Badri Nath Kaul Khudabali started making tea for him but Bhagawaan Ji said, 'We shall not take tea any more.' He then remained in *samaadhi* till 5.30 p.m., when he asked for water, and was helped to drink about a tumbler of sugared water. At 5.45 p.m., he uttered '*Om namah*

Shivaaya' in a low voice, and looked around with infinite love towards those present. He then closed his eyes and all was over. At this time, his eyes had developed some sort of aura, particularly his left eye which had also got a little enlarged. A doctor was called in and he confirmed the cessation of all the functions of the body.

Soon the tragic news spread and people started thronging the room. The ground-floor compound and the lane leading to the house were filled with the mourners. Some people wailed as if they had lost their father; others mourned the loss of their guardian angel and benefactor, and said that all hope had gone out of their lives as there was none left to look after their welfare. Some said the prospect of their future was bleak.

Many people poured spoonfuls of water into his mouth as the last drink offered to the departed soul; although advised not to do so, they persisted, failing to comprehend the meaning of his cryptic words, '*Amar chhaa maraan?*' i.e. 'Does what is immortal die?'

Some men of wisdom explained to the people present that even after the death of the physical body, he lives, in his *sat-chit-aananda* form and, being immortal, he will be ever present with them and continue to guide them not only in reaching the higher realms of spirituality but even in their worldly pursuits. We have to look for him within us with dispassion in our hearts, love for all creatures and malice for none, and we will find him. This has been confirmed since, as some people have seen him in a trance in a transcendental form, and others in dreams with a smile on his face and a look of compassion. Bhagawaan Ji's marble statue, installed at the *Ashram* establisehd for the purpose, where prayers are held morning and evening, has become a sacred place of pilgrimage and inspiration to many

saadhakas and laymen, who get peace of mind there and whose worldly aspirations also are fulfilled.

Regarding the rites, an altercation ensued between his devotees and blood relations. The latter wanted the regular *kriyaa* ceremonies to be performed, arguing that even Lord Raama had done so, while the devotees contended that Bhagawaan Ji, being a *jivan mukta*, *kriyaa* was not necessary for him. However, his sister and some other relatives had the upper hand and *kriyaa* ceremonies were performed for the first twelve days and, later, during the rest of the year at intervals, according to the *Karma Kaanda* rites, by his sister's grandson; he was regarded as having been adopted by Bhagawaan Ji, who had invested him with the sacred thread. During the first twelve days, all those who called were fed.

In the park adjacent to the house, where Bhagawaan Ji had lived for the last eleven years of his life, about 5,000 devotees had already gathered. The coffin, containing the sacred mortal remains and draped in shawls and bedecked with flowers, was carried to the park at about 12.30 p.m. on 29th May, 1968. All present there offered an *aarti* to it. Then the funeral procession proceeded slowly towards the Karan Nagar cremation ground.

The procession swelled enroute and people showered flowers from balconies and windows on the coffin. By the time the procession reached the cremation ground, there were above 20,000 people from all communities. Such a large gathering of people had never been seen in the cremation ground in the living memory. Most of them broke up into *bhajan mandalis* and *sat-sang* parties; others were too depressed to do anything and kept just sitting. It was a very touching sight. The *Nirvaana* rites were started by the pundits at about 5 p.m. and concluded at about 10 p.m. when

the holy mortal remains were laid on the pyre which was then lit. The holy ashes were collected a few days later and immersed at Shadipore, a place about ten miles from Srinagar at the confluence of the Jehlum and the Sindh river. A part of the ashes was preserved. It was immersed in the Gangaa at Haridwaar about seven months later.

The man incharge at the cremation ground said that he had never seen a *purusha* (Atlas vertebra) remaining intact and in perfect shape after cremation as in the case of Bhagawaan Ji, although the former had cremated numerous bodies so far. He showed the *purusha* to all present at the time of the collection of the ashes.

Swami Nand Lal Ji#, a saint of Kashmir, said metaphorically, with tears in his eyes on the day of Bhagawaan Ji's passing away, that Kashmir was being rocked by an earthquake and that a huge burden had been placed on his shoulders that day.

Four or five days earlier, Swami Ji, with a devotee of his and of his own accord, went to a place adjacent to Bhagawaan Ji's residence. Looking towards a window of Bhagawaan Ji's room he started weeping and said, 'Why is he going away and placing such a heavy burden of responsibility on my shoulders?' Swami Ji got the room, where Bhagawaan Ji had lived and the route of the funeral procession bedecked with banners. He himself took his seat (as he could not walk) on one of the windows of the room to watch the procession.

A *mastaana* saint, popularly known as Nanda Bub. He is not to be confused with the Yogi Swami Nand Lal ji of the Tikkar Aashram who had already passed away at Malaviyanagar, New Delhi. —Ed.

Chapter XIII

MIRACLES

It is not proper to mention the miracles performed by great saints as, first, they shun publicity and, secondly, they are not to be judged by their miracles. Some of them, in fact, are averse to the demonstrations of this sort, as they do not want to interfere with Nture's ways. Saints generally shun the *ashtasiddhis* (the eight supernatural powers), regarding them as detrimental to spiritual advancement. But, when a saint has attained Shivahood, what has he to lose or gain by performing miracles to help somebody? A few streams flowing out of the ocean, do not affect it. This was true of Bhagawaan Ji. He was a *Karma Yogi* who found the modern generation engrossed in materialism, with faith in God and godly ways shaken and crumbling. He had great compassion for the suffering humanity and would go out of his way to help them. By his very nature, he could not remain indifferent when the country was in trouble. He put in a great spiritual effort from 1947 onwards, unmindful of the physical hardships he had to endure in the process, to bring order out of chaos. Forgetting to eat and drink, and with a foaming mouth and blood-shot eyes, he would go on puffing at his *chillum* and offering oblations into his *dhooni*. He did not deliver spiritual discourses, but induced spirituality by a touch, a look or by offering *bhasma*, *prashaad* or his *chillum* to the suitable aspirants. He seemed to us to be too preoccupied to have any spare time. It seemed as if he was to appear in some difficult examination and was preparing for it. The struggle in his mind was not an open chapter. The miracles reported here have their own instructive value and depict the various aspects of his personality. This is the reason why, I think, they should form part of his

biography. Neither I nor any-one else could understand in which direction he was actually working, but major catastrophes were averted in those disturbed times because of his great penance, as is acknowledged by some other people also from Kashmir, which appeared to be the visible sphere of his activity.

In the first instance, some incidents affecting the country will be reported.

In the year 1947, raiders from Pakistan attacked Kashmir, committing murder, rape and arson, wherever they went. They reached even the outskirts of the Srinagar city and some people approached Bhagawaan Ji for help. He assured them that the raiders would not enter the city but would be halted beyond the seventh and last bridge over the Jhelum in the city. The raiders were actually halted much below the Chhattabal Octroi Post by the Indian Army.

Two months before the raid, he had told a devotee posted at Baramulla that he should get to Srinagar everything from Baramulla, even a blade of grass, as he had purchased those articles with his honest earnings. By Bhagawaan Ji's grace, the devotee was transferred to Srinagar before the raid.

Bhagawaan Ji once went to the Shri Shaarika Bhagawati Shrine at Haari Parvat. That was some time after the raid and a *Chandi yajna* was in progress there then. As soon as those present saw him, they flocked round him and requested him to save Kashmir. He replied, 'There is no danger, as I am always present on the battle fronts,' In one of his soliloquies, Bhagawaan Ji was heard saying, 'What is the army doing? They get so much rations and yet do not open a direct route to Kashmir for the Laddakhi Lamas.' We failed to comprehend what this meant. In the month of November, 1948, however, the Indian Army conquered the Zojila

pass and Kargil, and a direct link was re-established with Ladakh.

The part played by Bhagawaan Ji in this campaign was revealed by an officer of the Military Policy who was connected with this operation. He had been informed by the Front Commander that a mysterious person directed the operations and gesticulated to the *jawaans* at the battle front to fire in certain directions; this proved correct militarily. This Military Police Officer had been given the identification clues of the mysterious person and very much wished to know whether a person answering the description (who, he guessed, must be a saint) lived in flesh and blood. He gave the identification marks to one, Mr T.N. Dhar of Rainawari, Srinagar. During this period, Mr Dhar, among others, had already seen Bhagawaan Ji sitting on a pillow at his residence at Reshi Mohalla (Srinagar) and gesticulating with his hands as if to direct someone invisible to fire in this or that direction.

Mr Dhar told the Military Police Officer that he knew the saint in question and sent a man to escort him to Bhagawaan Ji's place. The officer was a plump, rather short-sized person of a dark comlexion and with a pock-marked face. He was a Christian. After seeing Bhagawaan Ji, he said that the saint exactly answered to the description given by the Front Commander, who had also said that the saint had been mainly responsible for their victory.

During this period, Bhagawaanji fasted. But one morning he suddenly had a barber called in, had a shave and broke his fast. He was in a relaxed mood and his genial self again. The news of the capture of Zojila was announced the same evening.

Late in the autumn of 1956, the people of Kashmir were panic-stricken owing to the uncertainty about the

future of Kashmir. A large number of them went to implore Bhagawaan Ji to save Kashmir. In a soliloquy, he remarked that Kashmir would be ruined if the Indian Army left. This accentuated their worry. Though this subject was often mooted, Bhagawaan Ji gave no reply but continued his austerities with redoubled vigour. One fine morning, when I, too, was present, he, on his own, gave the reply, saying that the Army would remain in Kashmir for the good of the country and the people. A month later, on 18th February, 1957, the UN Security Council passed a resolution co-sponsered by the USA, the UK, Australia and Cuba for inducting a UN Force into Kashmir. The resolution was, however, vetoed by the USSR and the picture changed dramatically. During these years, he would often say, 'Kashmir is in the throes of consumption (*silla*). I am sitting on Kashmir and will not allow it to drift away.'

Bhagawaan Ji also, seems to have been connected with the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 in some mysterious way. He was at the Bhadra- Kaali shrine about the month of September, 1962. As has been narrated elsewhere, he was once sitting in an open space with his *dhooni* on, and sent away all his devotees back to Srinagar, except his sister and Swaami Amritaananda, telling them 'Don't you see what is happeing across the mountains (Tibet side)? A whiff of the wind from that side will blow you over.' This period, too, was for him one of intense spiritual activity for the safety of Kashmir. He returned to Srinagar after about three weeks' stay. The Sino-Indian border war had already started. While in Srinagar, he told his sister one night at about 11 p.m. that he was going out. Noting his determination, she assented and he left the house wrapped in a wollen *chaddar* and carrying only his *chillum*. He returned after an hour or so, intensely cold. The Next day, he contracted bronchitis and all that. He told a devotee who had summoned courage enough to enquire where he had gone the previous

night, 'To Tibet, to settle matters.' Some days later, the hostilities ceased.

Before the Indo-Pakistan war started in 1965, he would, of his own accord, point towards the South-West (i.e. towards Poonchh, Rajouri and Gulmarg) and say that there was *Kaala* or Death there. The reference, we realised later, was to the Pakistani infiltrators who had sneaked into these areas and indulged in loot, arson and murder. One evening, during the 1965 war, he got up all of a sudden from his usual reclining position, saying that there was danger looming. He took out a sugar candy and put it into his mouth; he also gave a sugar candy to either of the two men sitting before him, and audibly asked himself whether he should save Srinagar or Delhi. Then he suddenly became silent. Only a few minutes later, the Srinagar aerodrome was bombed but the damage was minimal. It was learnt later that a Pakistani plane on a bombing mission to Delhi had been brought down near Meerut.

A few days before the hostilities ceased, he observed, 'The West is clear now.'

Now I shall proceed to give the details of some cases where Bhagawaan Ji helped to ease individual distress. The instances cited are authentic.

1. The wife of Shri Chuni Lal, Vice-Principal of a music institute in Srinagar, once suffered from the cancer of blood (Leukaemia). She was under the treatment of an eminent physician specialist. At one stage, on the basis of her blood picture, the doctor gave up all hope of her survival, and left her free to take anything she liked, as her end was near. Dejected and distressed, Shri Chuni Lal went to Bhagawaan Ji, who gave him a small packet of the ashes from his *dhooni.* With tearful eyes, he said, 'What will these ashes do to my dying wife?' Moved visibly, Bhagawaan Ji said that

she should take the ashes with water or medicine. Shri Chuni Lal went home sceptical about the efficacy of the ashes. He, however, told everything to his mother who snatched the tiny packet from his hand and put some ashes on the patient's tongue, smearing her body with the rest. The patient went off to sleep immediately. Waking up after two or three hours, she said that she was feeling hungry. Since the night had advanced, they could get and feed her milk only. The next day also, she felt very hungry though she had been given ample feeding. The doctor advised that the patient be taken to hospital for a fresh blood check-up. The check-up revealed a normal blood picture with no trace of the cancer. The doctor was puzzled and enquired of Shri Chuni Lal what he had done and how she had been cured. Shri Chuni Lal related the story of the ashes. He says that subsequently the doctor also went to pay obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji.

2. A lady in Delhi was declared a case of pyelonephritis (Tubercular). The tests revealed that the infection in the kidney was galloping and involving healthy tissue. A relative of the lady approached Bhagawaan Ji in Srinagar with the prayer to save her, as her death would mean the ruin of her three young children. Bhagawaanji was moved, filled his *chillum* and smoked it for about half-an-hour and said, 'Go, the lady is saved'. Her husband reported later that the tests had revealed an improvement in the condition of the kidney and that she was recovering. She recovered fully and leads the normal life of a housewife .

3. Once, one of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees was suffering from a heart and a stomach ailment. He went to Bombay and got himself thoroughly checked up by a professor of cardiology. The treatment prescribed did not have any appreciable effect. The patient returned to Kashmir and was one day sitting in front of Bhagawaan Ji who, of his own accord, told him that he had renewed

his heart and stomach. The devotee was fully cured. Next winter, he went to Bombay and got himself re-checked by the same cardiologist, who was surprised to find nothing wrong with the heart, and told him that he had expected changes for the worse in his heart during the year. He then enquired whether he had used the medicines prescribed. On being informed that the medicines had not been used, the doctor wanted to know how the marvellous cure had taken place. The patient informed him that it was only divine grace, leaving the doctor all the more amazed.

4. One of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees once broke the head of his femur. The patient's relatives approached Bhagawaan Ji for instructions whether the patient should be removed to hospital. He told them that he should rest in his room and that he (Bhagawaan Ji) would cure him himself. A month after the incident, he asked the patient's relatives to bring him to his place. He was taken there on a stretcher; placed in a chair, he was ushered into the presence of Bhagawaan Ji, who told him to rest for a few days in the ante-room. One day, Bhagawaan Ji went into the ante-room and helped the patient to stand up and move a few steps. He asked him to continue the practice himself with the help of crutches; after a few days, he directed him to go back home. The man is quite well and can walk long distances though with a slight limp.

5. One of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees was once laid up with an attack of what is commonly called 'black motions', and was removed to hospital by his relatives, without his (Bhagawaan Ji's) consent. After a few days, he advised a relative of the patient to get him back from the hospital, saying, 'I shall do the rest'. He also advised that the patient be given cooked rice and gram *daal*. Surprisingly, the doctor also suggested the same diet.

6. On 26-11-1966, one of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees, Pt Pran Nath Kaul, who appears to be the man of destiny for carrying on his mission, was sitting before him, as usual, when the latter's brother came in, running and alarmed. He told Pran Nath Ji that his father, whose nose had been bleeding mildly off and on for two days, had started bleeding profusely from the nose and that his condition was fast worsening. Pran Nath Ji was asked to go home immediately along with a doctor by his brother. The devotee was nonplussed and wondered how he could get a doctor, the hour being very late. He talked about it to Bhagawaan Ji. A lady sitting there also prayed to Bhagawaan Ji for the patient's cure. Bhagawaan Ji gave a small quantity of dry tea leaves lying in front of him to Pran Nath Ji and told him that a decoction of it, mixed with sugar, should be given to the patient. Pran Nath Ji continued to stay on at Bhagawaan Ji's place, asking his brother to take the tea leaves home. As soon as a few sips of the tea were taken by the patient, the bleeding stopped. The next day he felt normal.

7. In December, 1963, the Holy Relic was found missing from Dargah Sharif, Hazratbal, Srinagar. All the people of Kashmir were terribly upset. There was a great commotion in Srinagar and the rest of the Valley. Normal life got disrupted and the Government appeared to have lost its grip on the situation. There was an apprehension of the situation deteriorating further. Pt Shambhu Nath Bhan, later a member of the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust, and some others approached Bhagawaan Ji for help. Pran Nath Ji also was present on the occasion and joined the others in praying to Bhagawaan Ji that the Holy Relic must be found as only then would the peoples' anguish be over and normalcy return to Kashmir. After a short pause, Bhagawaan Ji smiled and said, 'There is no worry. The Holy Relic will be found soon.' The very next day, it was announced that the Holy Relic had been found. as

Bhagawaan Ji had predicted. Its genuineness was certified by the saint Khwaja Mirakh Shah Sahib of Shalimar and some other competent and reliable people.

8. A devotee of Bhagawaan Ji had a long-standing throat trouble, which the doctors suspected to be due to some malignant growth. Bhagawaan Ji asked him to get small brick pieces, heat them in the sun and keep applying them to his throat. After some time, the trouble disappeared.

9.(a) The husband of a pious and rich lady, a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, fell ill with the cirrhosis of the liver. The lady requested Bhagawaan Ji to cure him. Though the request was made many times, he did not say anything in reply. However, one day he asked the lady to get her hunband along with her to his place.

The lady's husband agreed reluctantly but, when he sat in the car to go to Bhagawaan Ji's place, he suddenly came out and did not go. He refused to go there on some subsequent occasions also. He passed away soon after.

On the night previous to her husband's death, the lady went to see Bhagawaan Ji. She complained about the patient's lack of appetite. He asked her to give him some tea and also said, in my presence, that the pandits had started the *kathaa* which meant that the man's end was near. The *kathaa* is narrated for ten days after the death of a Hindu in Kashmir.

(b) This lady was a great devotee of Bhagawaan Ji. She developed asthma and hypertension but continued to live for about fifteen years. One day, he told her, in my presence, that her disease was sleeping on one of his legs; he then pointed to a spot on his own right leg, where, however, we could see nothing abnormal. During the year 1972, about four years after his

giving up the gross body, the lady had a vision of him in a dream; he showed her his leg with a big scab on it but put the leg back under his *phiran*. This meant that he was still looking after her physical well-being, continuing to take the disease upon himself even after giving up his gross body.

Two or three cases have come to our notice when Bhagawaan Ji asked the patients to be brought to him. If they failed to come for this or that reason, they perished; those who came, got cured.

10. Bhagawaan Ji had a strange way of curing heart patients. When the patient would be sitting before him, he would begin feeling his own pulse for a few minutes in both the wrists alternately, and the patient would get cured. He also advised some such patients to have an oil massage after a bath.

11. Shri Shiban Lal Turki, a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, who appears to have brought a good store of spiritual prgress from his previous births and is well on the path of God-realisation, has reported the following experiences with Bhagawaan Ji:-

'(a) One day I was pressing Bhagawaan Ji's feet for an hour or so and felt elated for doing that good deed. Thereupon Bhagawaan Ji said, "You fool, you have gone crazy over pressing my feet which are simply splinters of wood". This opened my eyes and I fell at his feet, begging pardon. Nothing was hidden from Bhagawaan Ji, not even a thought that occurred even for a fraction of a second in another's mind.

'(b) I was studying in the B.Sc classes. One day, I wore a new shirt and pants, adding grace to my personality. My college friends started envying me. This inflated my ego and I thought I could make love to any girl I liked, and there were other low thoughts as well. I went to see Bhagawaan Ji about a week after this inci-

dent and he, in his bewitching way, repeated not only the sentences my friends had used about me but also my filthy thoughts. I started sweating from head to foot. Had I not known that Bhagawaan Ji was benign, I would have fainted. However, I became rooted to the spot, as it were, and could not move. He went on to say, "What does this body contain, except dirt, phlegm urine, filth and the other excreta? Which of the body's outlets gives out any thing attractive? So why this feeling of pride?"

'(c) I went to Agra to try and get an M. Sc. seat without taking Bhagawaan Ji's permission. The Head of the Department concerned kept dodging me from day to day and I had to stay on in Agra in the gruelling heat of summer. As I did not write to her, Mother, getting anxious, approached Bhagawaan ji. As soon as she mentioned me, Bhagawanji showed great anger saying, "Poor boy is being sent from pillar to post, and is staying in a building situated on a four-way crossing [an exact description of the place I was living at) but is well and will return soon." I returned home soon afterwards.

'(d) My elder brother's marriage was to be celebrated and it had been raining continuously for two days; there appeared to be no sign of the sky clearing and, if the rain did not stop, the marriage function would be in a mess for lack of adequate space in the house. Mother went to see Bhagawaan Ji. Looking at the sky through a window, he waved a stick in the air as if dividing the clouds. Soon after, the vast expanse of clouds broke into two, and the next morning the sky was quite clear. We could arrange the function in our compound.'

12. Sister Jai Kishori, a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji and model of chastity, is likely to be a promoter of Bhagawaan Ji's mission among the womenfolk. She has to say this about Bhagawaan Ji:-

'I went to pay respects to Bhagawaan Ji for the first time in the year 1964. As soon as I was seated before him, he cast an affable glance towards me and smiled. I felt a surge of bliss inside me. I continued to visit him practically every day thereafter.

'In the year 1967, the city was under curfew for many days and I could not go to see him. I felt very sad. An intense longing to pay my obeisance to him developed within me and I was restless. Then something unexpected happened: the curfew was lifted for just an hour and I dashed towards his residence. I found him in an ecstasy. He cast a benign look towards me and smiled. I returned home happy and relaxed.

'In the winter of 1967, I was returning from a pilgrimage to Haridwar; it snowed heavily and the road got blocked near Banihal. The clearance of the road was likely to take many days; I was in deep anguish, and did not know what to do. I could only pray to Bhagawaan Ji for help. After only a short while, the signal was given for our bus to start and we reached home in Srinagar safely. No other bus could come to Srinagar for a number of days on that occasion. The next day, I went to pay obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji. It seemed to me that he was waiting for me to come. After he had finished smoking his *chillum*, he looked towards me, smiled, pointed towards his own shoulders and said that he had to shoulder the bus for my safe arrival.'

13. Shri Mohan Kishan Ticku, an esteemed member and Organizer, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust, has reported the following experiene with Bhagawaan Ji:-

'I am a businessman and my shop is situated on the road-side on the main Ganpatyaar-Habbakadal Road, Srinagar, on the right bank of the Jhelum. Once, Master Zinda Koul Qasba, a well-known philospher-poet of Kashmir and popularly known as Master Ji,

was sitting in my shop, and there were some others also. Pt Shambhu Nath Bhan, a distinguished member of the BGT, passed that way and, seeing Master Ji sitting in the shop, came up and spoke to him. Master Ji enquired of Mr Bhan where he was going. He replied that he was going to pay his obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji. Master Ji told him that he had great respect for Bhagawaan Ji but did not like his smoking the *chillum* more or less constantly. Mr Bhan then walked on quietly. A few minutes later, I, too, followed him. As soon as we were seated after paying respects to him, Bhagawaan Ji raised his head and said, "What business has anyone to pass remarks in a road-side shop regarding my *chillum* smoking. I am doing this with a special purpose". Bhagawaan Ji being clairvoyant and clear audient, nothing was hidden from him.'

14. The incident that follows shows Bhagawaan Ji's solicitude for his devotees. Shri Makan Lal Tutoo, a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, has this to say:-

'Early in the morning of 29th May, 1968, I wanted to have Bhagawaan Ji's *darshana*, not knowing that he had given up his mortal frame the previous day. As soon as I learnt about the tragic fact, I was smitten with grief; I proceeded to his residence and joined the procession to the cremation ground. I am a businessman and used to go out of Kashmir to sell some Kashmiri handicrafts. I had returned from Delhi about a month before and was on the look out for a shop at a good shopping centre in Srinagar. In spite of great efforts, I had failed. In fact, my contemplated visit to Bhagawaan Ji on 29th May was for his help in getting a shop on rent. While the last rites were on at the cremation ground, I was feeling terribly dejected and forlorn, thinking that the very source of my divine help had dried up . Beset with grief and anxiety, I lay reclining on the turf-covered ground. Soon, I fell into a sort of trance in which Bhagawaan Ji appeared before

me, and directed me to follow him. He took me to Lambert Lane, one of the busiest shopping centres in Srinagar, opened the two locks attached to the shutter of a shop, raised the shutter, and signalled to me to enter the shop. Thereupon, I woke up from the trance.

'Three or four days later, I went to Lambert Lane. While I was sitting in a shop there, a man came up and informed me that a shop was to let. I approached the manager of the shopping centre straightaway. He handed over to me the keys of the shop there and then though he had rejected many prospective tenants. Bhagawaan Ji is very benevolent and helps his devotees in difficulty, even if he is not physically with us.'

15.(a) Shri Somnath Kaak, employed in Lloyds Bank, Srinagar, narrates the folowing experience:-

'My brother, Shri Jawahar Lal Kaak, when he was an Engineering student in Bombay, suffered an attack of renal colic. The doctors diagnosed it as a case of renal stone and advised an immediate operation. As soon as I received his telegram to this effect, I approached Bhagawaan Ji for help. He started rubbing his own left side, and, in his characteristic way, observed, "Stones come down with snow, with water; look, the stone has come down with urine." Though the hint was clear, I repeated my request. He, in turn, repeated that the stone had come down. Next morning, I received another telegram from my brother stating that, after another severe attack, he had a vision of somebody with a turban on and wearing a *phiran* upturned; this man was pulling at the stone. A few minutes later, the patient passed urine and the stone came out . He knew nothing about Bhagawaan Ji then.

'Later on, my brother again developed a kidney stone. On 3rd April, 1967, I received a telephone call from him from Bombay that he was to be operated upon

on 5th April, 1967. As soon as I received this information, I went to see Bhagawaan Ji at about 6 p.m. There were many people assembled there and I could not get an opportunity to speak to him till 11 p.m.; by then, all others had left. I told him that it would not be possible for me to reach Bombay on the 4th, i.e. the next day, to be present at my brother's operaton on the 5th morning. "Go by air", he said firmly. When I said that it would not be possible to get an air seat on the 4th without prior booking, he repeated, "Go by air tomorrow." Miraculously and by his grace, I got an air seat direct to Bombay by which I arrived on the 4th evening. On the 5th morning, the patient was operated upon successfully. Soon after, as he was being taken out of the operation theatre, he regained consciousness. The first thing he enquired about was, "Where has Bhagawaan Ji gone ? He was with me, when I was taken to the theatre, with one side of his *phiran* on his shoulder and with a turban on " He (Bhagawaan Ji) had also told him that he should wire his mother in Srinagar to get *purees* made of 2 1/2 seers of flour, and send these to his (Bhagawaan Ji's) residence at Chondapora, Srinagar. The *purees* were taken to Bhagawaan Ji's place; he smiled and distributed them among all present.

(b) 'In 1960, accompanied by the other members of my family, I went on a pilgrimage to Haridwar. Before leaving Srinagar, I went to seek Bhagawaan Ji's permission. He agreed and gave me a small packet of *bhasma*, advising me to keep it with me. This was unusual, as he gave *bhasma* only on request. From Srinagar, we went direct to Delhi to spend a few days there before proceeding to Haridwar. Our host in Delhi, Shri Lakshmi Nath Zalpori, lived in only one room along with his family. We felt cramped up in it and wanted to leave as soon as possible. Nevertheless, we stayed on for three days. When we were about to leave for Haridwar, our host's daughter, aged about nine,

was suddenly taken seriously ill; she aso lost consciousness. The doctors diagnosed it as a case of meningitis. After three days, her condition worsened and the doctors gave up all hope of her survival. We felt extremely sad at our presence in the room when death was hovering over a member of our host's family. I lay awake the whole night, invoking Bhagawaan Ji's grace to save the girl. Early in the morning, the idea flashed across my mind that the *bhasma* given to me by him, was meant to cure the girl. Straightaway, I ran to her mother and asked her to wash the patient's face. Her mother declined the request saying that the girl was dying. She gave in, however, in the wake of insistence. I took out à small portion of the *bhasma* and, mixing it with a little water in a tea-spoon, put it into the patient's mouth. She could not gulp it down and part of it spilled through the corners of her mouth. A few minutes later, when I tried again, a little water mixed with the *bhasma* went down her throat. About 15 minutes later, she started moving her legs and arms, and began to moan in a low husky voice. After about half an hour, she regained consciousness and opened her eyes. An hour later, she sat up in her bed. In the evening, she played with her playmates.'

16. Once, Bhagawaan Ji cried out, 'There will be an earth-quake, causing much destruction.' The many people present became panicky, fearing Kashmir might be rocked by the earth-quake. The very next day, there was a terrible earthquake in Iran, causing immense loss of life and property.

17. An incident reported by Pandit Vish Nath an old man in the employ of Ganesh Asthaapan, Srinagar, runs as follows:-

'In the year 1960 or thereabout, on the day following the Diwali day, I went to Bhagawaan Ji's residence at about 3 p.m. There were many other people also there.

A youngman from among them picked up a lump of hashish lying in front of Bhagawaan Ji while the latter was busy smoking his *chillum*, and hid it in his *phiran* pocket. After Bhagawaan Ji had finished smoking, he asked the youngman to keep the hashish tied in a handkerchief. Thereupon, the young man noticed that the pocket in which he had placed the hashish had become heavy. He also sensed something moving in it. After he had put a hand into the pocket, he started shrieking, "A snake, a sanke . I am dying; I am dying. Save me." And a black snake, about 3 feet long, came out of the pocket, and all those present in the room, including Bhagawaan Ji's sister, bolted. Bhagawaan Ji, however, said, smiling, "There is no danger. Come back." The snake crawled on to Bhagawaan Ji's lap and stayed there for a while. Bhagawaan Ji patted it on the back with his right hand and then asked it to go away. It crawled into one of the folds of his *aasana* and was never seen again. This, obviously, was a reprimand to the youngman for committing theft.

Bhagawaan Ji usually did not seem to take notice, if anybody stole the money lying before him. A small boy once stole his cloth purse with money in it, but brought it back the next day.

18. During the year 1947, when Pakistani raiders attacked Kashmir, a Kashmiri Hindu was on duty in the Sindh Valley into which the raiders had infiltrated. As he failed to return to Srinagar, his wife got anxious and approached Bhagawaan Ji early one morning, praying to him for the safety of her husband and his safe return to Srinagar. In a round-about way, Bhagawaan Ji indicated that there was danger to her husband. She understood what he had told her but kept sitting, imploring him in her heart that her husband-might return home safely. At about 2 p.m., Bhagawaan Ji asked her to leave, saying that he would return. Dodging raiders, her husband reached Vayilu, a place

about 18 miles from Srinagar, that very evening. There, he found a bus full of passengers. He pleaded with the driver to take him along and was made to sit on the roof of the bus. Reaching Srinagar, the bus stopped suddenly near Jama Masjid. He lost the balance, toppled over and fell down. But he felt somebody holding him in his arms while he was falling, and saving him from sure death. Those who saw him falling down ran to him and removed him to a shop on the road. After he had taken some water, he was his normal self again and walked home. There is a proverb in Kashmiri that, by the intercession of saints, '*Kaathis Chhe Kaath Gatshaan*', i.e., a man destined to die on the rack gets a mere scratch instead.

19. Pt Maheshwar Nath Qasba, a businessman with strong faith in *Karma Kaanda*, is a scholar of Vedantic Literature. He has visited and served many saints, but, maintaining his individuality, sipped at all cups, draining none. He called at Bhagawaan Ji's place during the period 1957-68 off and on. One of the experiences, related by him is given below:

'During the year 1966, I once went to Bhagawaan Ji's place at Chondapora, Srinagar, late in the afternoon. While sitting in his august presence, I had a feeling that I would miss my evening *aarti* at the Haari Parvat Shrine of Shri Shaarikaa Bhagawati and was very much disturbed. At dusk, while sitting before him, I was delightfully surprised not only to get a full picture of the *aarti*; I saw clearly the big vermillion-coated slab, on which is engraved the Shri Chakra representing Shri Shaarika Bhagawati, the ghee lamps kindled by the *pujaari* as is usual with him on such occasions, and a dazzling light on the wall behing Bhagawaan Ji; I could also hear the *aarti* being recited there. This was a scene never witnessed by me before, away from the Shrine. What puzzled me was Bhagawaan Ji's insight into the hidden recesses of my mind and fulfilling my

desire by not only bringing a visual picture of the *aarti* but also making it audible to me. It seemed to me that the very walls of Bhagawaan Ji's room were reciting the *aarti*.'

20. Shri A.N. Fotedar, then a Divisional Forest Officer, was suspended from the service on a flimsy charge and for no fault of his, in the year 1958. During the period of his suspension, he, along with his wife, was once going to a friend's house, when he encountered Swaami Nand Lal Ji (Nanda Bub), a clairvoyant saint of Kashmir, mentioned earlier also. Swami Ji, whom Mr Fotedar had not met previously, directed him to follow him to the house of a Kashmiri Hindu, where Swaami Ji, along with a retinue of people, was going. Swaami Ji, who was in the habit of putting on a *tilak* on the foreheads of all who came to him and giving *parvaanas* (chits of paper written on by him) to people, wrote down a *parvaana* in Urdu and handed it over to Shri Fotedar. On this *parvaana*, which is still in Mr Fotedar's possession, it was written that he should put in an appeal to Shahanshah (King of Kings) Gopi Nath Ji who is adorned with seven medals, and lives at Chondapora, Srinagar. He also told Shri Fotedar that he would meet a man at the Haari Parvat Shrine, Srinagar. The man would guide him to Bhagawaan Ji's residence. Mr Fotedar used to have a daily *parikramaa* round Haari Parvat. Two or three days later, while he was going round the hillock in *parikramaa*, he met a subordinate of his, who implored him (Mr Fotedar) to go and seek Bhagawaan Ji's grace. He pleaded with earnestness and offered to take him to Bhagawaan Ji's place. A few days later, Mr Fotedar went to see Bhagawaan Ji accompanied by this man and also on some subsequent occasions.

On one occasion, while Mr Fotedar was sitting in front of Bhagawaan Ji, he started debating in his mind about the pros and cons of astrology. Though he tried

to put the idea out of his mind, he failed, and became uncomfortable and felt irritated. Meanwhile, a man come and sat in front of Bhagawaan Ji. After he (Bhagawaan Ji) had smoked, he gave his *chillum* to this man, who returned it after having a few puffs. Soon after, this gentleman started speaking about the effect of the *grihas* (stars) in the various positions in a horscope. Mr Fotedar, who has a rational and critical mind, did not believe in horscopes and did not in the first instance suspect that this man was speaking about the positions of the stars in his (Shri Fotedar's) own horscope, but somehow he got interested and began to listen to him with attention. Mr Fotedar asked him where he had seen his *janma kundali* (chart of stars). The man did not reply but closed his statement with the remark that horscopes are true, but the man reading them must be a *saadhaka* who can interpret them correctly. Bhagawaan Ji again gave him his *chillum*. This man had a few puffs and, returning it to him (Bhagawaan Ji), fell silent. It now appeared that he was not the same man as had spoken about the correctness or otherwise of horscope reading. He even confessed he knew nothing about astrology.

Mr Fotedar visited Bhagawaan Ji frequently but did not broach before him the subject of his re-instatement. On one occasion, however, Bhagawaan Ji himself brought up the subject and told him that about the time it was spring in Jammu, he would go there and be re-instated, though there would be certain bad remarks and some loss of pay. He also said that, though he would, subsequently, go to court for redress, the case would linger on, till the Government of Bakshi Gulam Mohammed had been replaced by the Sadiq Government, which would redress all his grievances. That was what actually happened. Mr Fotedar is in the Indian Forest Service and is working as Conservator of Forests at present.

21. In this second edition of Bhagawaan Ji's biography a few miracles that were reported by very reliable persons have also been mentioned. Any mention of the miracles performed by the Bhagawaan after giving up the gross body has been avoided, since the book is 'a biographical study'. An exception has, however, been made in the case of the following incident for the simple reason that Pandit Ramaadutta Shukla has mentioned it in the Hindi version of Bhagawaan Ji's biography.

*The late Shri Shankar Nath Zadoo, a disciple of Bhagawaan Ji, had contacts with him for about three decades. Shri Zadu says, 'My wife, Smt. Prabhavati Zadu, passed away in May, 1970. Her sudden and untimely demise caused me not only much financial loss but also told upon my physical condition; I developed a serious nerve disorder. I roamed about like one having lost his mental balance as a result of some grave calamity. There was hardly any desire left in my mind. My daughter was very sad because of my physical and mental state. And in December, 1973, (Shri Zadu lived from September, 1971 to May, 1976 with his daughter and son-in-law in Bombay) she persuaded her husband, a devotee of Shri Bhagawaan Satya Sai Baba, to seek the Baba's grace for my well-being. The Baba was to deliver a lecture at Andheri, Bombay, and she virtually forced me to attend it. On reaching the venue of the lecture, I was wonder-struck to see an audience of over 40,000, eager to listen to the Baba as also the *bhajan* (hymn)- singing groups. Having concluded his speech, as the Baba was proceeding towards the rooms where he was staying, he passed by the place where I was. Standing before me, he said, "Your Guru (that is, Bhagawaan Shri Gopi Nath Ji, who had given up his gross body in May, 1968) has directed me to grace you" He also asked me whether I had been struck by some disease of the nerves. I gesticulated to indicate that I had been. Thereupon, he quickly moved around his right hand and, all of a sudden, sacred ashes started

coming out of his right thumb. Giving me the ashes, he directed me to eat some of them and with the rest besmear my head. As soon as I ate the ashes, I felt an electric current, as it were, running from my head to feet; I underwent a sudden change: I became perfectly healthy, repenting over my folly and ignorance.

'While the Baba stood before me, he said, "Your Guru (Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji) was the greatest Kashmiri saint; he was a *jivanmukta* (liberated while still in the gross body). In the real sense, he is not dead. He will appear before you in about two months.......

'Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji gave me his *darshana* many times in those two months. He emphasized the transience and unreality of this world and spoke about the problems concerning *moksha* (liberation).'

*22. The late Professor Kashi Nath Dhar, a former President of the Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Trust, related his following experience to several members of the Trust:-

Once he (Prof. Dhar) visited at Chattabal a family closely related to him on the mother's side. One day, he went out to the market, a *gadvi* (liquid container) in hand, to fetch some milk. On his return, he lost his way in a maze of lanes. Even after wandering about for about a couple of hours, he had no idea where he was; the lanes and the rows of houses appeared to be quite unfmiliar. He grew very anxious. Then a certain lane led him towards the River Jhelum. He heard an angry remonstrance: 'Why are you coming in this direction? Take that small lane.' And he found that it was a Kashmiri Pandit, wearing a *pheran* and a white turban, and carrying a *gadvi* full of water in his right hand. The man was coming up the steps of a *ghaat*. Professor Dhar took the lane indicated and in a few moments was just before the house he had to return to. Bhagawaan

Ji was still in his gross body then.

Many years later, Shri Pran Nath Kaul and some other senior members of the Trust approached Prof. Dhar to accept the Presidentship of the Trust. After some initial reluctance, he accepted the offer.

When he entered the Ashram hall at Kharyar, Habba Kadal, he was amazed to find a hundred per cent resemblance of the man who had led him back from the market and Bhagawaan Ji's marble statue — to the statue and not to the many photographs of the Bhagawaan in the hall. The statue does not bear a complete resemblance to Bhagawaan Ji's gross body and so not to the photographs either. Was it an indication in advance that the statue to be installed in future at the Ashram was to be taken to represent him in spite of a lack of complete resemblance?

Prof. Dhar had never seen Bhagawaan Ji.

*23. Dr Kaushalya Wali of the Post-Graduate Department of Sanskrit, the University of Jammu, says:-

(a) 'A certain family had felt somehow somewhere lacking in peace at home, although every mentionable material facility was available to its members..... A few members of this family went to Bhagawaan Ji one fine evening. They sat in front of Him for some time. As usual, He was busy making offerings to his *dhooni* and...... having a puff at his *chillum*, when, in between, he stared at the faces of these visitiors for some time, and then said, "You will be free on Monday"......On the said Monday , the electric staff came to check the electric charges. The [electric] wire of a room was giving way; on being replaced, therewith came down a folded paper. The paper was unfolded and in it were found some grains of ash and some painted images of the members of the family with their hands bound. The

elders of the family took this paper etc. to some person knowing this occult art and it was interpreted by him as the unwholesome effort of a not-well-meaning relative to harm the progress of this family by taking recourse to ....black magic.

*(b) ' The young father of a number of small children was on the death bed. The mother of the children along with a few relatives implored Shri Bhagawaan Ji to save the dying patient in the interests of his minor children. It is said (that) since that day Bhagawaan Ji gave up taking food for about a month, and, as a result, ... the patient's life tenure was extended by one year.'#

*24. Mr Philip Simpfendorfer, an Australian devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, says, 'He (Shri Gwash Lal Malla) had once been obsessed by the contrast between the seemingly endless weariness of his life and the statement that the whole of humanity's existence on Earth is only a small part of one day in the life of Brahmaa (in fact one Brahmaa's day is 2160 million years). Going to Bhagawaan Ji with the problem, he was given an empty *chillum* to puff by one of the people present. Feeling giddy, he left but collapsed in the street and someone took him home. At 11 p.m., it was reported to Bhagawaan Ji that the man was still unconscious. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath said, "It doesn't matter. He is all right. Put this piece of sugar into his mouth." At about 2 o'clock, he returned to his senses. During the trance, he had lived many cycles of life (only three cycles of life, according to the late Gopi Nath Malla, perhaps - Ed.), and he understood how one day of Brahmaa could be equal to millions of earthly years.'

24. The following are some of the miracles marrated to Mrs Kusum Handoo by Smt. Gauri Ji## [Mrs Prabha-

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Dr Kaushalya Wali: 'Some Reminscences of Bhagawaan Ji' in the Ashram *News Letter, Vol.II, No.1.*

Bhagawaan Ji considered Smt. Gauri Ji to be as good as his daughter

vati Handoo], daughter of Shri Bhola Nath Handoo, a boy-hood friend and, later, disciple of Bhagawaan Ji. The miracles happened on Bhagawaan Ji's way to, and after his return from the holy Amarnath Cave.

* (a) 'During the pilgimage, Bhagawaan Ji's party was divided into two groups, women and men. The group of women, who went ahead, thought that Bhagawaan Ji was with the men who, in turn, thought that he was with the women. But he lay at some distance supine and seemingly asleep. When Shri Bhola Nath tried to "wake him up", Bhagawaan Ji said, "What have you done? Don't you see everything around is scorched? I was trying to water this area." Shri Bhola Nath said, "But, Sir, rain will mean great difficulty for us. It may lead to some dangerous situation." Bhagawaan Ji replied that no harm would be done to the party. All along the rest of the journey, Bhagawaan Ji and party were in the sun; the rain followed immediately after.'

* (b) 'About a week after returning from the pilgrimage, Bhagawaan Ji and the Handoo family decided to visit Gautam Nag, a holy place about three kilometres from the Anantnagh town, towards Mattan. Even though only a vegetarian meal may be taken at Gautam Nag, they carried, at Bhagawaan Ji's behest, their lunch consisting of cooked rice and fish curry. As the party was having their lunch near the spring, the *Mahant* of the place, Swaami Gwash Kaak Ji, appeared on the scene. In very great anger, he asked Bhagawaan Ji why, even though the latter was a *brahmachaari* (celebate) and *saadhu* (saint), he was taking fish at a holy place where nothing non-vegetarian might be taken. Bhagawaan Ji said calmly, "Who has eaten the fish? If you want them back, here they are." And he put two of his fingers into his mouth and vomitted two living fish,

'and, whenever, after taking no food for months on end, he was persuaded to take some, he would generally direct that the food be cooked by her. She was an eye-witness to all these miracles. —Ed.

which jumped into the spring. The Swaami prostrated before him and prayed for forgiveness.'

* (c) 'After a week or so, the family, along with Bhagawaan Ji, visited another holy place in the Anantnagh District, called Trisandhyaa. It is a miracu lous place: the holy tunnel-shaped spring there remains bone-dry for most of the year, but during a brief period, water wells out in fairly good quantities twice or thrice a day, and pilgrims bathe in it. As part of their worship of the holy spring, they drop flowers and thrice-washed grains of rice into it. During the intervals between the welling out of the water, the spring becomes so waterless that mice appear and eat the rice. On the day Bhagawaan Ji was there, *Trisandhyaa* appeared — i.e. water welled out — eight times. Then a woman came there to absolve herself of her sins by bathing in the holy *Trisandhyaa*, but, even after a long wait, *Trisandhyaa* did not appear. Then she prayed to Bhagawaan Ji that it might appear. But he, in great anger, told her "*Mondee* (O wretched one), why did you let the cows burn to death in your burning house? Why did you not let them loose in time? You have committed such a heinous sin that, as long as you are here, the holy *Trisandhyaa* will not appear." All those present urged her angrily to go away. After she had gone a little distance, *Trisandhyaa* appeared. She returned to take a dip. But no sooner did she reach the holy place than *Trisandhyaa* disappeared. After she had finally gone, it appeared again and all present bathed in it for the ninth time that day!'

* (d) 'In mid-1948, Bhagawaan Ji alongwith Shri Bhola Nath and the Handoo family went to the Nishat Bagh by boat. Bhagawaan Ji took up one of the dead fish they carried to be cooked as part of their lunch. He rocked it in his lap for many minutes and then threw it into the Dal Lake. And lo and behold! As soon as it touched the water, it regained life; a normal and

healthy fish now, it swam about,—and away!.'#

*25. Mr Iqbal Kaul of R K Puram, New Delhi, accompanied Bhagawaan Ji on a pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath Cave 'around August, 1946.' On the return journey, Bhagawaan Ji did not permit him and others to proceed beyond Panchtarni. Mr Kaul writes:

'We had our lunch, packed our bags, and sought Bhagawaan Ji's permission to return to Wavjan. He would not let us leave our place, and did not budge from his *aasana*. All of us remonstrated with him, informing him that we had to corss a difficult leg of the route, and (that) any delay in departure would create unnecessary problems. These arguments did not cut any ice with him...Therefore, in utter frustration, we gave up pleading with him. However, around 4 p.m., he allowed us to set off for Wavjan.

'A shock awaited us at the Mahagunas Pass. The whole area of the Pass was carpeted with thick layers of slime and slush. The pilgrim pathway was converted into ruts by the passing ponies and pedestrians. Depressions were brimful with water and tiny rivulets were cascading down the slopes. The area, only twenty-four hours earlier, was bone-dry. We found a few frightened Kashmiri Pandit ladies here. They were soaked to the skin and shivering with cold. They told us their tale of woe. A freak cloudburst had struck the pass, and a large number of *yaatris* (pilgrims) had been caught by the deluge. We reached Wavjan around 9 p.m. in good cheer. (Now) the significance of Bhagawaan Ji's negative attitude at Panchtarni dawned on us. Had we started at Panchtarni according to our will, we, too, would have received a drubbing from Nature. It was Bhagawaan Ji's intervention that saved us from a nasty situation.'##

Mrs Kusum Handu: 'Some Miracles of Bhagawaan Ji' *(The BGT Patrika, Vol IV; No. 1)*

Ikqbal Kaul: 'To Amarnath with Bhagawaan Ji' in the Ashram *News Letter; Vol. II, No. 1*

*26. Shri A.N. Fotedar, IFS, a retired conservator of Forests, was a witness to the following:-

'One evening, while it was snowing heavily, the Bhagawaan, as usual, was in an ecstatic mood, puffing away at his *chillum*. Suddenly, he held the *chillum* in his left hand and looked out through the window near him, shouting, "O puny mortal, donning an immaculate military uniform covering your huge body and sporting a well-trimmed moustache, you cannot frighten us from across the mountrains. We are here under the protection of Shri Shaarika and numerous saints and sages, both of the past and the present. Their grace has protected us from marauders and continues to do so. You can do whatever you like in the area on the other side of the mountains, South and West of Kashmir. The yellow race with slit eyes and snub noses to the North of us, which, you think, will come down on us to help you in your evil designs, dare not do so now. The King, whom they will drive out of their area, will not be allowed to come to our sacred land, but may be received, and thereafter live in the hills and mountains East of Kashmir. I again tell you and do so forcefully, "Do not even cast an evil eye on this sacred land and do not expect the slit-eyed, yellow-faced and snub-nosed northerners to help you in this misadventure."

'Only the following day the news came that General Ayub Khan had taken over in Pakistan in a military coup, and had imposed martial law on the country. In the subsequent years, the insurrection in Tibet against the Chinese oppression resulted in the flight of the Dalai Lama and his followers into India, east of Kashmir. Later, in 1962, the Chinese launched a massive attack on India which shook it to its foundations. But all the fighting took place away from the Kashmir Valley.'#

A.N. Fotedar: 'The Bhagawaan as I saw Him '(*The BGT Patrikaa, Vol IV No 1*)

27 *Mahaatma Nand Lal Ji, popularly known as Nanda Bub, once decided that the marriage ceremony of a devotee girl of his should be performed in the house at Gadood Bagh, near Chondapora, Srinagar, where Bhagawaan Ji lived during the last years of his earthly life. Shri Pushkar Nath Kaul of Kani Kadal, Srinagar, a saintly person, was asked by both the saints to officiate at the ceremony in place of the girl's father who was lying very ill in the room adjacent to that of Bhagawaan Ji. The following incident has been reported by Shri Pushkar Nath Kaul himself.

After the earlier ceremonies, the *Mehandiraat* and the *Devagone*, the day of the wedding came. On the arrival of the *baraat*, Bhagawaan Ji blessed the girl, saying, '*Deka bad aasin!*' ('May her husband outlive her!'). The *lagan* (the marriage rituals) started at 9 a.m. Towards the close of the lagan ceremony, *poshi-pooza* is performed: the girl's parents and other relations shower heaps of flowers on the newly-wed couple while the officiating priests chant Sanskrit verses blessing the couple. Now, just before the *poshi-pooza*, Shri Pushkar Nath went to the room, where the girl's father was lying ill, to see if the latter could muster strength enough to go and drop at least a few flowers on the couple and bless them. But he was shocked to find the man's elder daughter wailing and beating her chest as he had just died.

Besides being shocked, Shri Pushkar Nath was at a loss whether to carry on with the marriage rituals and the ceremonial farewell to the couple and the bride-groom's people, or whether to start performing the rituals for the dead and organise the funeral procession to the cremation ground. It was an extremely difficult situation and he did not know what the injunctions of the shastras were to tackle it.

In a fix, he approached Bhagawaan Ji whom he

found in a deep spiritual ecstasy. But before he could say anything, the Bhagawaan opened his eyes and said rather loudly, *'Dapus thahar pagaah taanya.'* ('Ask him to wait till tomorrow'). Shri Pushkar Nath could not understand the purport of these words. He, however, returned to the dead man's room where he was pleasantly surprised to find him smiling and talking to his elder daughter. He now informed him about the *poshi-poozaa.*

The function ended at about 7 p.m. and the couple was blessed by Bhagawaan Ji on their departure.

On the following day, the girl's father suddenly died, and his funeral rites were duly performed.

Chapter XIV

BHAGAWAAN JI'S PHILOSOPHY

Sakori Baba, a great saint, has aptly remarked, 'The work of saints is the saving of souls or their absorption into the Source wherefrom they have sprung, putting an end to the cycle of birth and death. They guide, but never compel anybody. The chief function of saints is on the astral or the spiritual plane; which it is impossible for the intellect to understand or appreciate.'

Shri Aurobindo has also said, 'Saints do not live in their outer actions visible to people.'

Bhagawaan Shri Gopi Nath Ji, whose philosophy I am trying, in all humility, to interpret, was an introvert. He spoke very seldom and always remained absorbed in the Supreme. When his attention was drawn, he would come down to this plane, speak a few words to the questioner and then again get absorbed in the Supreme. No one dared disturb him while he was smoking his *chillum*, with the eyes turned towards the sky, and emitting vibrations and also receiving them; A discerning eye could see this. One does not, however, know about the depths of his spiritual experience. I had of necessity, therefore, to depend on the cryptic aphorisms uttered by him in my presence or in that of others, on various occasions, and on his response to the environment, in order to draw up a mental picture of his philosophy and then make an attempt to interpret it. From a perusal of some notes in his own hand, and of what some people, associated with him in his young days, had to say in this connection, it is reasonable to conclude that he practised, to begin with, the old *Sanaatana Panchaanga Upaasanaa*, in which Maha Ganesha, the Divine Mother, Lord Naarayaana, Lord

Shiva and the Sun god are worshipped. In Kashmir, Shiva-Shakit *Upaasanaa* is known to have been practised from time immemorial. It was natural, therefore, for Bhagawaan Ji's mind to be swayed towards Shakti *Upaasanaa* at the impressionable age. His first ideal was Shri Shaarika Bhagawati. It is said that he had the *saakshaatkaara* of the Divine Mother before he was 27. This was to him, like his illustrious predecessors (most saints and mystics of Kashmir), the stepping-stone for the exploration of the higher realms of spirituality.

In Bhagawaan Ji's own handwriting, we find two *Omkaara* symbols in the Shaarada script (which was then common in Kashmir and which is slightly different from the Devanagri script) written somewhere about 1925 AD, when he was about 27. A facsimile of these is reproduced on the next page.

All the space around and within *Omkaara* I is filled with *Raama Raama* except that inside each double line forming the *Omkaara*. This suggests that *Raama* is an adjunct of *Omkaara*. Linkewise, *Shiva Shiva* is written in the case of *Omkaara* II, the space between the two lines forming the *Omkaara* being blank. The blank spaces in the case of each *Omkaara* seem to represent the Formless, Immutable and Eternal Brahman round which everything centres.

Above *Omkaara*-II, the following *mantra* is written:

Shrimat Param Brahma Gurum Vadaami
Shrimat Param Brahma Gurum Bhajaami
Shrimat Param Brahma Gurum Smraami
Shrimat Param Brahma Gurum Namaami
Om Tat Sat Om

These two *Omkaaras* clearly point to the two paths of realizing Brahman: one through devotion to Raama

I

II

(i.e. to Vishnu or Naaraayana) and the other through devotion to Shiva; the *mantra* above *Omkaar*-II suggests the recognition of the guru as *Parambrahma*.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has observed that he appeared lost without taking refuge in Naaraayana. Bhagawaan Ji, too, would often utter the word Naaraayana. Once he told me that Naaraayana's was the highest Maayaa. Pointing towards his *dhooni* he said, "It is Naaraayana's Paada (feet or an aspect). Is not Naaraayana within your heart (hridaya)? Become a Naaraayana."

A few years later, while I was contemplating on the *saakaara* form of Naaraayana, Bhagawaan Ji struck me with his pincers. Curiously, this had the effect of shifting me to the contemplation of Naaraayana without a form and attributes. The Supreme Entity, Ishwara, or Brahman is regarded by the devotees of Vishnu as Naaraayanaa Who transcends the trinity of Brahmaa, Vishnu and Rudra. Aadi Shankaraachaarya regarded Him as the qualified or *saguna* version of the unqualified or *Nirguna Brahman*. Shankara's attitude towards this was one of a constant awareness of His being Brahman in association with, but in complete control of *Maayaa Shakti*. When the Supreme Being is recognised through a higher gnosis, He is *Nirguna* Brahman and when He is realised through emotion, He is Vishnu or *Saguna* Brahman. Bhagawaan Ji was a man of cold logic. Although he was often seen in an ecstatic state, he did not display any emotions outwardly. During the last thirty years or so of his life, he was never seen shedding tears of emotion or showing any signs of distress, as those following the *Bhakti Maarga* or the path of devotion often do. I asked him once whether the vibrations he was emitting, through his *chillum*-smoking or from the various parts of his body, could be indicative of *Ajuz* or *Inquisaary* (humility and entreaty). He replied that that might be so but

did not elaborate. It is obvious, therefore, that he regarded Naaraayana as *Saguna Brahman.* But the proposition becomes somewhat complex when we see it in the context of what follows.

Bhagawaan Ji often uttered the name of Shiva also. Just before he gave up his mortal frame, he uttered the words' *Om namah Shivaaya'.* In the year 1946, he went on a apilgrimage to Shri Amarnath Ji. There, he gasticulated and said, 'Shiva is dancing everywhere', and he was in a state of ecstasy the whole day.

To my mind, Bhagawaan Ji's philosophy was something akin to the *Trika* Doctrine of the *Advaita* Shaivism of Kashmir, with *Jnaana, Icchaa* (will) and *Kriyaa* (action) predominating. This doctrine means the recognition of the Self and the return of the Self, through realistic thought, to the state of perfection from which It has fallen. This philosophy represents and harmonises the triplicate doctrine of Man, the Universe and the 36 *tattwas.* Its primary purpose is to explore the nature of the Reality and the experiences gained from the regular system of practice for the exposition of thought and the oneness of the individual soul with the Universe, through improved materialism. Though there are many principles common to the Vedantic and Shaiva philosophies, Shakti is special to the latter. The Shaivas believe that the Universe is created, preserved and dissolved in Shiva alone. In Vedaanta, it is *Maayaa* alone that is responsible for creating the Universe, the whole of which is a delusion. The recognition of the Self and the return to Its original, pristine state of absolute perfection, where we need nothing or lack nothing, is, according to this system, the state of *moksha* (salvation). The Shaivas argue that the *Purusha* (Shiva in a limited form) because of the association with the body, takes up the three taints (*malas*) *Aanava, Maayiya* and *kaarma* which are responsible for obscuring the true nature of the Self, for differentiating between the Self

and the environment on the one hand, and between good and bad on the other; and are responsible for higher and lower births. It is in the nature of Shiva's Supreme will that He hides His real nature from Himself and manifests Himself in the form of a *jiva* and then again as one with His true nature. They say that anything created by Shiva cannot be unreal, and so this phenomenal world is not unreal. *Trika* is regarded as an experience of the individual awakening to the level of the universal consciousness, and is believed to carry a man on the path of equilibrium. This philosophy believes in self-recognition, action and devotion. This is borne out by Bhagawaan Ji's actions over a number of years.

Bhagawaan Ji used the word 'we' and not 'I' when he was to do something: if a meal was to be served and he alone had to take it, he would say, 'We shall take'; likewise, he would say, 'We shall do this or that thing', even if he alone had to do it. This clearly points to the path of evolution from the 'I'-stage (*Idantaa*) to the egoless *Ahantaa Tattwa*. This *Sadaa-Shiva* state is regarded as the unmanifested *Omkaara* form of Shiva.

It is said that Yogis feel the presence of Shiva in the *Aatman* (the Soul) and not in the *pratimaas* (idols)

We cannot say whether the Naaraayana Cult or the Shiva Cult predominated in Bhagawaani Ji's mind or whether his was a synthesis of these two cults; it has been said:

Shivaaya Vishnu roopaaya,
Shiva-roopaaya Vishnave;
Shivasya hridayam Vishnuh;
Vishnosh cha hridayam Shivah;

i.e. Shiva and Vishnu are one and the same.

According to Aadi Shankaraachaarya, so long as one

considers oneself a separate and external entity, the Supreme Ishwara, too, is an external entity as also the external Universe. When, however, one effaces, and transcends one's individuality, and wakes up into the unbroken awareness of Brahman, Ishwara and the Universe, too, melt and merge into the one *Nirguna Brahman.* The following analogy makes the idea clear:-

'The *jivas* are many fragments of the pan-cake ice that surrounds Ishwara, the giant iceberg floating in the polar seas of *Nirguna Brahman* in the marvellous irridescent glow of the Aurora Borealis of *Avidyaa* in the Arctic winter. But the moment the Arctic summer sets in, and the sun of *jnaana* (knowledge) rises on the horizon, the numerous fragments of pan-cake ice and the iceberg melt and merge in the Arctic sea whence they emanated. So, too, *Jiva* and *Ishwara* who are but projections of Brahman, are real, so long as the differential awareness persists. But when the Universal awareness has dawned, *Ishwara,* the *jivas* and the multitudinous Universe melt and merge in the undeniable awareness of the non-dual *Nirguna Brahman.*'

A learned Brahmin from Kashmir who was at an advanced stage of *Pranava* (*Omkaara*) *upaasanaa,* once put Bhagawaan Ji some questions about that kind of *upaasanaa.* Bhagawaan Ji replied in a loud voice, '*Omkaara* is the throat of the Godhead. Nothing is possible without it.'

Bhagawaan ji told me once 'Do you think this sort of *saakaara upaasanaa* will help you in realizing the *Aatman*?", meaning that the *Aatman* can be realized by *vichaara*+ and not ++*saakaara upaasanaa.*

On another occasion, he told me, 'Why do you shun the actions by which the *Aatman* can be realized?'

+ Meditating on the nature of the *Aatman,* that is, the Self.

++ Worshiping, and meditating on God with a form.

Addressing a devotee, Bhagawaan Ji once said in Kashmiri:

'Ahankaaras namaskaar;
Sui gav Omkaar.
Tami saati bani saakshaatkaar.'

Translated into English, this means:

'Bidding adieu to *ahankaara* (the ego) means concentration on *Omkaara*, by which one will get *saakshaatkaara* (self-realization).

Or,

Ahankaara means the realization that I am the Universe or the true ego; and that is *Omkaara* leading to *saakshaatkaara* (self-realization).

An incident, narrated by Pt Gopi Nath Dhar, who was associated with Bhagawaan Ji for over two decades, is reprodeced below, in the former's own words:-

'Once, in May, 1957, an *aachaarya* from Benaras came to see Bhagawaan Ji early in the morning in order to ascertain what his spiritual evolutionary stage was. He bowed before the Bhagawaan and sat down in front of him. I also happened to be present. After learning from me Bhagawaan Ji's name, the *aachaarya* asked me at what stage of spiritual development Bhagawaan Ji was. I felt non-plussed as I could be no judge of the latter's spiritual evolution. Bhagawaan Ji, realizing my predicament, smiled and uttered Verse 6 from Chapter XV of *Shrimadbhagvadgita:*

'Na Tad bhaasayate Suryo,
Na Shashaanko na Paavakah;
Yad gatva na nivartante,
Tad dhaama paramam mama.

'The *aachaarya* listened with rapt attention, bowed before Bhagawaan Ji and said that he had got the answer. After some time he left, happy and satisfied.'

An English rendering of the above verse is as follows:-

The Sun does not illumine it, nor the moon, nor fire. That is my supreme state, reaching which one does not return.

Probably, this is what is called the Supreme State, *Svadhaama*, illumined by the self-luminous *Brahma-Jyoti*, reaching which one does not return to the cycle of birth-death-rebirth,

This state is mentioned in the Upanishads also:

Na tatra suryo bhaati,
Na chandra Taarakam;
Nemaa vidyuto bhanti; kotoyam agnih?
Tam eva bhaantam anubhaati sarvam;
Tasya bhaasah sarvam idam vibhaati.

So this was the Supreme State of awareness Bhagawaan Ji had attained.

This Supreme State is described by Kabir Sahib, in his dialogue *(Sat Sangh)* with Yogeshwar Gorakh Nath Ji, whom he desired to be elevated to this state. Kabir Sahib regards this state, *Aatma-Loka*, as beyond anything transitory (*kshara*) or permanent *(akshara)*, and states that the mastery over *Pranaayaama* or the *shatchakras* will not take the yogin to Sameer, the highest spot in the brain (*Brahmarandhra*); it will leave him only half way. He also says that, if one reaches the stage of *Akshara*, one will be free from attachment and hatred, and will have true renunciation and freedom from the clutches of *Maayaa*. In the *Atma-Loka*, there

is neither one nor two, neither truth nor falsehood. One should try to get merged into it. In that *Loka*, there is no Sun, Moon, Earth or Sky; no pain or sorrow; no action, and no pleasure or pain, which are the result of *karma*. There is no question of dependence. The rich, the poor, the recluse, can all reach it. Kabir Sahib also advised Gorakh Nath Ji to suppress his ego, become small and unsophisticated, and abjure the *siddhis* and the consequent pride of accomplishment; otherwise, the trammels of *Maayaa* would keep him away from the Reality. Kabir Sahib also suggested to him that he should keep the *dhwanyaatmak* sound, i.e. *Pranava-Shabda* (*Om*) as his ideal and, with its help, reach the *Atmaloka*. The *shabdas* (sounds) he heard from the *Shat-chakras* were not real; the *Pranava Shabda*, after coming down from *Kaarana* (causal) and *Sookshma* (subtle) *Sthaanas*, as *Madhyamaa* and *Pashyanti*, had reached his ears so far; proceeding ahead, he would hear the real *Pranava* sound. That was the state Kabir Saheb himself was in.

Bhagawaan Ji did not seem to be interested in awakening the *Kundalini*, or the *Shat-chakras* in the spinal cord. Once, when I was emitting vibrations probably according to the method he himself was practising, he admonished me not to emit them so forcefully lest the 'serpents' in me shold wake up. On another occasion, he told me that in the vibrations that I was emitting, a concentrated sound of *'Om, Om'* alone was heard in the *Aakaasha*; it was not accompanied by the sound of my ideal. That was to correct my practice in order to make it suitable to the stage of spiritual evolution I was at then.

Saakshaatkaara, according to Bhagawaan Ji, was some sort of divine light coming to an individual. This is borne out by what follows.

1. He told me once in Kashmiri when I was seriously

studying the *Gospel* and some books about Shri Ramakrishna Parmahansa and had *Mahaakaali* as my ideal (without telling Bhagawaan Ji what I was about). '*Yi chhu kitaab paraan. Tor chhaa gaash?*' (This man is reading the book (used collectively for books on a subject). Is there any light there?' Or, 'tor' may mean in the region from where the books I was reading had come.

Once a devotee of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa brought a photograph of his to Bhagawaan Ji. The latter scanned it and said, 'He was a *Purusha*'; and asked a devotee to hang it on a wall of his room, where there were many photographs of some Hindu gods and one of Guru Naanak.

2. Pt Dina Nath Ticku worshipped God with a form. Bhagawaan Ji told him in my presence, 'You have light to the level of your throat but your body is blank.' He later became a disciple of Bhagawaan Ji. To begin with, he enquired of Bhagawaan Ji as to how he was to proceed on the path of God-realization. Bhagawaan Ji replied in a short sentence, 'Do as I do'. There upon, Mr Ticku started imitating Bhagawaan Ji's outer actions. He would smoke a *hookah* when Bhagawaan Ji smoked his *chillum*. When Bhagawaan Ji spat, he did the same. He would eat when Bhagawaan Ji ate and so on. He imitated Bhagawaan Ji's rhythmic vibrations also. Of course, he thus made himself ridiculous in the eyes of others but he carried on quite unconcerned about their reactions. Subsequently, he got the *saakshaatkaara* at the *Kshirbhawaani* Shrine on a certain night, due to Bhagawaan Ji's grace, when Swaami Amritaanandaa and I, too, were present. Next morning, Bhagawaan Ji told me in a sad tone, 'Light has come to Dina Nath but it is such that it will kill him.' Later, while Bhagawaan Ji was at Bhadra Kaali, he sent Dina Nath away to live at his own house at Rainawari, Srinagar. There, he attracted much attention by making predictions that

came out true. Bhagawaan Ji sent him word to come and see him on several occasions, but he disobeyed, saying that he, too, had become a Bhagawaan. He died of cancer after a few years.

If Mr Ticku had obeyed Bhagawaan Ji's summons and gone to see him, would the latter have been able to change the nature of the light that killed him ? But this is a moot point.

3. Bhagawaan Ji had a strong affinity for light (*Jyoti Swaroopa*); he would keep *dhoop* and *agarbatti* in flame and not smouldering, as also his *dhooni*, on many occasions. A few days after his giving up the gross body, one of his disciples was to sleep in the room where his (Bhagawaan Ji's) *aasana* was. He switched off the light and was about to fall asleep when he felt a violent kick on the sole of one of his feet. He understood that he had committed a mistake in switching off the light. He switched on the light and slept peacefully thereafter.

4. Once, I was sitting in front of Bhagawaan Ji, poking the fire in his *dhooni*. Bhagawaan Ji said, 'You think these are ordinary embers. *Trikoti devataas* come to this *dhooni*.' This means that, when the *devataas* are invoked, there should be light as, otherwise, the spirits of darkness may come and cause trouble to the man, or take possession of him. This was probably the reason why, during the period of his intense *saadhanaa*, (1930-37) he kept a small earthenware lamp burning.

5. On another occasion, while Bhagawaan Ji was at the Kshirbhawaani Shrine (Tulamula), a devotee asked him why he did not go to the holy spring to offer flowers, milk etc, as all other worshippers did; why did he keep aloof in his hut, away from the spring? Bhagawaan Ji said, 'There is a dazzling light there (in the spring)'; This

clearly was a reference to the veil of *Brahma Jyoti*, the dazzling divine light enveloping the *devas* and the Divine Mother, without the removal of which one cannot see their personal transcendence. (A prayer in the *Ishaava asyopanishad* reads, 'Lord, shift your dazzling effulgence so that the devotee can see the Reality.'). Bhagawaan Ji further said that our seeing the Divine Mother is not important; what counts is that She should look towards us', i.e., shower Her grace upon us.

Looking towards the sky, Bhagawaan Ji once told me, 'There is nothing else there except the *chetan Bhandaaras* of *tej* (i.e. conscious masses of light).

As has been stated previously, Bhagawaan Ji was a *Tattva-jnaani* who, with his intuitional eye, (the third eye, or, *jnaana netra)*, could see the nature and colour of the elements and their divisions and subdivisions. Those chosen by him for a higher degree of realization could, according to their individual capacities, be intuitively guided by him, or directed to blow continuously into fire, or, in other ways, to gain some knowledge of some of the elements.

Bhagawaan Ji once told me, 'Think of Brahman as a tree and sit on any one of Its branches (representing Shiva, Naaraayana etc.). The same goal will be reached in each case.'

He would not dissuade anybody from pursuing his own ideal in *upaasanaa*. Nor would he suggest an ideal directly; he always did that indirectly.

Bhagawaan Ji, once at Kshirbhavaani, asked for a copy of the *Vishnu-Sahasranaama* out of the many religious books a certain man had. He scanned the pages, turning over the leaves many times and looked towards me. Then he returned the book to the man.

This was a hint to shift me over to the *upaasanaa* of Naaraayana, as my previous ideal had not proved helpful to me.

Bhagawaan Ji once told Shri Pran Nath Koul, a devotee of his and at present Secretary of the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust, to get framed a picture of Lord Vishnu on Sheshanaaga, which somebody had given to Bhagawaan Ji. Just after he had returned the picture, duly framed, Bhagawaan Ji told him, ' Look, how beautiful this picture is' This was an indirect instruction to him to start the *upaasanaa* of Lord Vishnu.

Though he suggested *saakaara upaasanaa* to the beginners, he did not seem to relish that kind of *upaasanaa*. He would say, '*yi gav taaph parun*' (this means worshipping sunshine) i.e., worshipping the effulgence of the Sun and not the substance. In this connection, he once said, '*yi gav veeri shihilis tal pakun*', i.e., this means moving about under the shade of willow trees. Willow trees have a cool shade. Walking under the shade means a lackadiasical form of *upaasanaa* and not plunging into the field of God-realization with complete surrender, come what may.

Though *Niraakaara Upaasanaa* bristles with difficulties and tribulations, Bhagawaan Ji.would, gradually wean away his devotees from the *Saakaara* to that type of *upaasanaa*. This was in keeping with the Upanishadic dictum:

Tasmaat saakaaram anityam,
Nityam niraakaaram iti.

Once, a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, mustered courage enough to enquire of him who his guru was. Bhagawaan Ji replied, pointing towards a copy of the *Bhagvadgitaa* lying near him, 'Any verse out of the 700 verses of the *Bhagvadgitaa* can be one's guru. In

reality, it is Ishwara, the real Self, who is one's guru.'

On another occasion, devotional songs were being sung before Bhagawaan Ji to the accompaniment of instrumental music. A verse in a Kashmiri song extolling the virtues of the guru meant, 'O devotee, worship the lotus feet of your guru, uniting your *manas* (mind) and *praana* ('the vital breath that sustains life in a physical body'). Pointing towards me, Bhagawaan Ji said, '*Yi gatshi yatshun*', that is, it is an indication of God's grace if one surrenders at the feet of one's guru. I had been worshipping Ishwara and in this remark I read a clear instruction that Bhagawaan Ji wanted me to switch over to the *upaasanaa* of the guru as I had probably passed the first stage, at which God draws near a devotee who thus attains His grace; Bhagawaan Ji wanted me to proceed to the next stage at which the guru is worshipped as God. This *saadhanaa* leads to the manifestation of the real Self in the egoless state, and the devotee and the guru merge in the universal *Aatman*.

Bhagawaan Ji guided his devotees according to their capacity to absorb his teachings, and this was done by induction and rarely by word of mouth or directly. The devotees who could not follow his own method of emitting rhythmic vibrations in consonance with cosmic vibrations were not given up by Bhagawaan Ji as lost. He would help them in the *upaasanaa* of the deities with forms and they, too, advanced slowly.

Bhagawaan Ji once told a devotee, that the requisites for God-realization are '*mehnat pananya beyi guru-kripaa*', i.e., one's own effort and the Guru's grace.

One night, some time before he gave up the gross body, Bhagawaan Ji recited from memory four out of the five chapters of the *Panchastavi* in the presence of

a devotee. He suddenly stopped after reciting the following verse from Chapter V :-

Ajaananto yaanti kshayam avasham anyonya kalahair
Ami maayaa granthau tava pariluthantah samayinah;
Jagan-maatar janma- jvara-bhaya-tamah - kaumudi vayam
Namaste kurvaanaah sharanam upayaamo Bhagavatim.

Probably, he did this for the benefit of the devotee who was a worshipper of the Divine Mother and could not advance further though Bhagawaan Ji had attempted to shift him to his own method of emitting vibrations, in which he did not succeed; or, may be he slid into the plane of the aesthetic perception of the virtues of the Divine Mother to impress upon the devotee that She is not different from Brahman, or, it was all his *'man kaa mauj'*, i.e., the mind in ecstasy.

As far as I could understand from my personal contact with Bhagawaan Ji for over two decades, the *Devis* are *chetan* (conscious) units of *teja* (effulgence) that come down to the Earth and remain there at various places for a thousand or two thousand years, and then revert to the source from which they had emanated. This way we can explain why the Shaarada Bhagawati Shrine in the Kishen Ganga Valley fell to the raiders from Pakistan in 1947. Probably She had left the site. About a hundred years ago, it is said, that Shri Raajnaa Bhagawati of the Kshirbhawaani Shrine moved away to the adjacent swamp; but in responce to the supplication of her devotees returned to Her original spring in the Shrine. In the Kashmir Valley, there are many shrines of the *Devis*, but some are not worshipped now. These *chetan* energy *bhandaars* (stores of conscious effulgence) in the shape of *Devis*, too, appear to be having different qualities. While to some vegetarian offerings are made, to others mutton is offered.

A devotee sitting in front of Bhagawaan Ji was wondering once whether the truth should be told even if doing so involves others in trouble. Bhagawaan Ji answered him, saying *'Satyam shivam sundaram'*. #

Bhagawaan Ji would put on a *tilak*, wash his *yajnopavit* (sacred thread) daily, and observ other daily rites also, but only in a casual manner. He would not differentiate on grounds of religion. Shri Shiban Lal Turki once told Bhagawaan Ji that his official duties involved him now and then in inter-dining. Bhagawaan Ji replied, 'Is Hindu one and Mohammedan another?'

Nila Bub, a saint, lived at Zaindar Mohalla, Srinagar. He used abusive language often but was clairvoyant. He would come sometimes to see Bhagawaan Ji during the period 1957-68 A.D. and always sit at a particular window of Bhagawaan Ji's room. One day, a lady brought some cooked rice in a cooking pot and placed it before Bhagawaan Ji. Normally, he would observe religious purity and take his meals from a *thaali* ## placed on a woollen cloth. But this time, he placed the pot on the ground, took out some food and offered it to Nila Bab, who refused to take it as it was unclean, having been placed on the ground. Thereupon, Bhagawaan Ji finished all the food himself. Nila Bab was an orthodox Brahmin saint still in the trammels of caste, and Bhagawaan Ji wished him to rise above caste and creed. Whenever Nila Bab called later, Bhagawaan Ji was indifferent to him.

Bhagawaan Ji never advised anyone to give up his household, wife or children, in the pursuit of God-realization. He said a worldly man, too, could be a man of dispassion (*vairaagya*). But he was adamant in not guiding people until they practised celebacy. The two centres of *Brahma-jnaana* are said to be present in the

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The Truth is (that which is) blissful and beautiful. -Ed.

A kind of alloy plate used then by Kashmiri Hindus. -Ed.

intellect (*buddhi*) of an individual, one being near and the other beyond, at the back of *Chidaakaasha*; and both these are well-preserved by the *brahmachaari* (celebate). Bhagawaan Ji used to be pleased whenever a *brahmachaari* came to him for guidance.

Bhagawaan Ji showed great consideration for the spiritually advanced. Master Shankar Pandit who was Headmaster of the Biscoe High School, Srinagar, was a scholar of Vedaanta and saint, who had contacts with several saints throughout his life. He used to come frequently to pay his obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji. On one occasion, I was sitting before Bhagawaan Ji, when Master Ji called. Bhagawaan Ji treated him with tea and was happy to see him. I wondered why Bhagawaan Ji showed so much consideration for him. After an hour or so Master Ji left. Reading my thoughts, Bhagawaan Ji said, 'Why are you so cross? He(Master Ji) is a *Surya* (Sun).'

Being decrepit in body, Master Ji could not come to Bhagawaan Ji in the last years of his life, but Bhagawaan Ji used to send him food every year on his (Bhagawaan Ji's) birthday, except the year during which Master Ji died. Master Ji said that, since Bhagawaan Ji did not send him *prashaada* during that year, he would pass away, and he died a few months later, while reading the 11th Chapter of the *Bhagvadgita*, by Bhagawaan Ji's grace. Master Ji had said that, if anybody could save Kashmir from 1947, onwards, it was Bhagawaan Ji. Working with an indomitable will and a heroic effort, unmindful of the physical privations Bhagawaan Ji underwent for about 21 years, he saved Kashmir from the calamities that engulfed the rest of India.

Bhagawaan Ji did not belong to the class of the *advaitins* of the *Jnaana Maaraga* (the School of knowledge) who believe themselves to be actionless souls;

they do not assist virtue and destroy vice. (He participated actively in moulding the environment at great personal sacrifice.) This will be clear from the example of Lalleshwari, one of the greatest saints of Kashmir. She lived in the 14th Century and has left a large number of *vaaks* containing the highest principles of the Shaiva philosophy. She did not, or possibly could not interfere with the changing picture of Kashmir then. But Bhagawaan Ji, participated actively in moulding the environment, though at great personal sacrifice. It is said that, if there is a *jnaani* in this world, his influence should benefit not only his disciples but the whole world.

When Bhagawaan Ji's younger brother, Pt Jia Lal Kaak,# died, his sister came to inform him about it, stricken with grief. He told her, 'What had he to do in this world now? He has gone over to become a Raj-Yogi, and it is meaningless to grieve over his passing away.'

We did not actually perceive what he recited, or whether he recited anything while emitting the rhythmic vibrations from the various parts of his body, or while smoking. The vibrations caused by the chanting of *mantras* are believed to correspond to the original vibrations that arose from *Hiranyagarbha*. The rhythmic vibrations from *japa* are believed to regulate the unsteady vibrations of the five sheaths.

Once, Bhagawaan Ji was lying down, emitting vibrations by the rhythmic movements of his intestines. I started imitating this; Bhagawaan Ji said, 'What are you doing? These vibrations, if not properly emitted, will overturn the world'. He told me on another occasion that the vibrations emitted by me might reach the ceiling of his room or at best the roof in the next higher storey, but that they would die there. Once he told me

#By birth a brother of Bhagawaan Ji but adopted into a Kaak family (see chapter I) -Ed.

that the vibrations emitted by me were still-born. I cannot throw any light on the nature of these vibrations, but Bhagawaan Ji had complete mastery over them. I got a clue to the nature of these vibrations when he told me that I was throwing out vibrations from the nerve centres, which was the *kriyaa* (action) of *Devaloka* (sphere of the gods) and not of *Manushya* Loka (sphere of man). He further said that I could not come out of these vibrations, i.e., these would become automatic and I would not be able to stop them. In my boyhood, I saw a saint called Nila Kaak (living in the house of Mr Gopi Chand Zutshi of Shehliteng, Srinagar) who continued with this practice till the end of his days, as he probably could not check the vibrations. This practice of emitting vibrations is very common among Sufi saints and is known as 'Zikri-Haq'. Sufism was initially a product of Indian thought but it travelled to West Asia and back to India from there: 'old wine in new bottles'. It is my belief that Bhagawaan Ji regarded this as a very superior and direct method of Self-realization though it involves much taxing effort and causes many tribulations.

Bhagawaan Ji said once that a yogi may attain the realization of God but a *vichaaravaan* can attain the realization of all the aspects (i.e., *Paadas*) of Brahman. By *vichaara* (introspection) the capacity of the intellect of an individual increases, and he is enabled to catch the *sukshma vichaara waves* (subtle currents of thought) and newer and newer thoughts are produced, which remain in the *Chid Aakaasha*, as *vichaaras* never die. All the *vichaaras* of an individual get into the all-pervading omniscient life force, pervading throughout the creation, and remain there (Say, like genes in chromosomes). Similar *vichaaras* get mixed up and generate a tremendous potential force for good or evil, as the case may be. This probably was one of the reasons for the rhythmic movements of Bhagawaan Ji's body-parts, or smoking rhythmically, as if he was

throwing his vibrations into the all - pervading life currents and also reacting to the vibratiions from them. It will thus be clear that an emotional appeal had no place in his actions, so far as I could understand. He was a *mahaa purusha* (great soul) believing in action.

Before closing this chapter, I wish to recall an incident related by Shri Som Nath Kaak. Shri Janki Nath Bhan of Shaalakadal, Srinagar, once confronted Bhagawaan Ji with the intriguing quesion whether saints should render assistance to people in the spiritual and temporal spheres. Does such help not exhaust the spiritual treasure acquired by a saint after great penance and sacrifice? Bhagawaan Ji replied, 'A man or an animal with a muscular and bulky body can afford to swim across a river. Can a small insect like an ant do so without help? It has to be helped.'

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Chapter XV

DEVOTEES AND DISCIPLES PAST AND PRESENT

This biographical study will not be complete unless mention is made of the individuals whom Bhagawaan Ji blessed specifically. All of them did not benefit equally from the divine spark he kindled in them. There must be others also in whose spiritual evolution he must have helped. But we know nothing about them. It is a fact that he sometimes instructed people who were not present before him physically. They may have been there in their *sookshma shariras* (astral bodies). The most important point in this connection was the *saadhaka's* capacity to absorb his teachings or methods, depending upon the *sanskaaras* of his past lives.

To bring this point home, an example of a great saint of Kashmir, Swaami Prasad Joo Sahib (who lived at Khardori, 2nd Bridge, Srinagar), may be given. According to Pt Shridhar Joo Dhar, Swaami Ji is reported to have said often, 'The *ashta siddhis* are there, tied to the broom, lying near the door of my sitting room. I do not allow them to come near me.' Swaami Ji was a saint of such a high order that a great and well-known saint of Kashmir, Swaami Anand Ji, used to send him a present every year on his birthday. Pt Gopi Nath Sahib was Swaami Ji's yonger brother, and served him devotedly throughout his life. Swaami Ji was a great *yogi*, always absorbed in his *Sat-Chit-Ananda* state, and his brother would feed him, putting morsels of food into his mouth. This was the state of his devotion to his brother, but Swaami Ji said often that, though he tried every possible method for his spiritual advancement, there

was no response from his brother. Spiritual evolution is thus not a matter of a single birth.

The method of spiritual evolution is not a random process as a guru for each *saadhaka* seems to have been ordained, and also the path to be followed by each, according to his previous *sanskaaras*.

The following is a brief account of some of the devotees of Bhagawaan Ji.

The Period 1937-47

1. Pandit Naila Koul Saraf: He came into contact with Bhagawaan Ji during the latter's stay at his residence (1937-47), and often accompanied him on his sojourns at, and visits to different shrines. He was a *saadhaka* and probably received initiation from Bhagawaan Ji himself.

2. A Sikh saint came from the plains, remained with Bhagawaan Ji for about three months, and was thoroughly initiated by him. His wereabouts are not known.

3. Pt Maheshwar Nath Zutshi of Mallapora, Srinagar. was a man of great dispassion. He would eat only the rice pounded by himself. He said that he had been directed by Shri Shaarika Bhagawati to take initiation from Bhagawaan Ji, who, once, offered him a meal, a drink and his *chillum* to smoke, and then told him to go. He died only a few years after initiation, but had become a *siddha* by then.

4. Pandit Bhola Nath: He served Bhagawaan Ji for a number of years and was successful in following Bhagawaan Ji's own method of emitting vibrations through smoking a *chillum*. He, too, advanced well on the path of spirituality.

The Period 1947 to 1968.

5. Pandit Premnath Manwatoo: He was a teacher. His fore-fathers had been *vedaantins*. He served Bhagawaan Ji at Srinagar and also at some places outside Srinagar, at various shrines. Bhagawaan Ji used to offer him his *chillum*, after smoking it himself. He seemed to be following Bhagawaan Ji's own method of *saadhanaa* and he (Bhagawaan Ji) appeared to be satisfied with his progress. As he had other affiliations also, I doubt whether he had the *saakshaatkaara* during his life time.

6. Pandit Dina Nath Ticku: Mention has been made of him in the chapter on Bhagawaan Ji's philosophy. By Bhagawaan Ji's grace he attained the *saakshaatkaara* at the Kshirbhawani Shrine.

7. Pt Gopi Nath Sultan: He was an employee in the Game-Preservation Department of Jammu and Kashmir. He was imprisoned by the Pakistani raiders while on duty at Skardu in 1947. He returned to Srinagar after a few months' imprisonment and became a follower of Bhagawaan Ji. He used to smoke a *chillum* as Bhagawaan Ji did. He got an over-dose of spirituality, losing his mental balance for some years. During this period, his wife approached Bhagawaan Ji and he told her that he (Gopinath Sultan) would be quite normal in due course, just as normal as she or Bhagawaan Ji was. He is quite normal now, and a saint well on the path of realization. He regards Bhagawaan Ji's disciple, Pt Dina Nath Ticku, as his Guru.

8. Pandit Gobind Koul: He had been a companion of Bhagawaan Ji since his early boyhood and the Bhagawaan always showed great regard for him. It seems that he has had contacts with Bhagawaan Ji during many past lives. Though he did not seem to follow Bhagawaan Ji's own method, he is on the path of spiritual evolution through his grace. Possibly, he practises

saakaara upaasanaa (devotion to God with a form).

9. Pt Raghu Nath Sapru, a disciple of the saint Baalak Joo Kaw, frequently called at Bhagawaan Ji's place, during the latter's stay at Chondapora, and took an active part in celebrating the Bhagawaan's birthdays for some years. He fell seriously ill once and was called by Bhagawaan Ji to his own place. He remained with him for about three weeks and returned home completely cured. He had great reverence for Bhagawaan Ji and was one of the three men present at the time of his giving up the gross body.

10. Pt Gopi Nath Dhar: He was a devotee associated with Bhagawaan Ji for the last two decades of his (Bhagawaan Ji's) life. He, too did not, unfortunately, come up to the method of *upaasanaa* taught by Bhagawaan Ji, but is well set on the path of spiritual evolution, through *saakaara upaasanaa*.

11. Pt Shankar Nath Zadu: He used to come to pay obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji for about three decades. He had other affiliations also. He did not attempt to follow Bhagawaan Ji's own method of *saadhanaa*, possibly on acount of the tribulations involved in the method. However, he seems to be doing well with his *saakaara upaasanaa*. Pt Zadu used to visit a saint. Pt Sama Kak, a devotee of Shri Raajnaa Bhagawati. He told Pt Zadu not to go to see Bhagawaan Ji as he was a *mastaana* saint. But Pt Zadu could not resist the temptation of seeing Bhagawaan Ji except for a few days. As soon as he seated himself in front of Bhagawaan Ji, he told him that he (Mr Zadu) had had contacts with him for six previous births. Could those ties be snapped by anybody?

12. Swaami Amritaananda: He worked at Shri Shivanada Ashram, Hrishi-Kesh, for a number of years, as Publicity Secretary. When he came to Kashmir in 1950,

he met Bhagawaan Ji who offered him a new *chillum.* He served Bhagawaan Ji at the Kshirbhavaani Shrine on many occasions. He visited Bhagawaan Ji off and on while the latter was in Srinagar. As directed by Bhagawaan Ji, he has been living at the Kashirbhavaani Shrine ever since. He has had the *Saakshaatkaara* of the Divine Mother and has been exploring some other paths of self-realization also.

13. Badrinath Khodabali: He had contacts with Bhagawaan Ji for nearly two decades. He rendered him personal service especially during the last two years of his life. He was by Bhagawaan Ji's side at the time the latter gave up the gross body. Some *sanskaaras* of previous births seemed to hinder his spiritual progress. He cured a few people, though. He died in 1972.

I shall now make mention of the devotees of Bhagawaan Ji who are active members of the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust and the newly-established Ashram (where his marble statue has been installed) and who form the nucleus for further activities. Bhagawaan Ji showered his grace on them and they are advancing on the path of spirituality.

14. Pt Pran Nath Koul: He is Secreatry of the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust. He used to come daily for about seven years to Bhagawaan Ji's place, spending two to three hours at the Master's feet. He attended to his *dhooni* and personal comforts. He is the nerve-centre of the Ashram and seems to be the man of destiny for furthering Bhagawaan Ji's mission.

15. Pt Shiban Lal Turiki: He is the Joint Secretary of Bhagawaan Ji Trust. He, too, had been visiting Bhagawaan Ji for a number of years, off and on. He has brought with him good *sanskaaras* from his previous births. If his ego does not disturb him, he will be an outstanding saint. He has an altruistic attitude.



The marble statue of Bhagawaan Ji installed in June, 1972, at the Ashram named after him in the premises of the Durga Mandir, Kharyar, Srinagar.

16. Sister Jai Kishori Ji: She had been having Bhagawaan Ji's *darshana* regularly since 1964 and rendereding him useful service. She is an active member of the Bhagawaan Ji Trust and its Librarian. She is a pious soul and well-entrenched in her *saadhanaa*. She can serve as an ideal for other women.

17. Pt Madhava Joo Sathu: He is blessed; Bhagawaan Ji lived in his house for about ten years. He and his wife, Chaandaa Ji, served him well during this period. He is the Vice-President of Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Trust.

18. Shrimati Dhanwati Dhar: She would go for Bhagawaan Ji's *darshana*, for about two decades and also attend upon him. Possibly, she regards Bhagawaan Ji as her guru. She visits other saints as well. She is generous and a *saadhikaa*. Her daughter, Shrimati Gouri Karihalu, was also devoted to Bhagawaan Ji.

19. Pt Anand Koul: He has had contacts with Bhagawaan Ji for over two decades. He used to come and sit silently before Bhagawaan Ji. He is the Cashier of the Bhagawaan Ji Trust.

20. Pt Amar Nath Daftari: He used to come to pay obeisance to Bhagawaan Ji for a number of years. He had other affiliations also. He is the Accountant of Bhagawaan Gopi Nathi Ji Trust. His father, a saintly person, too, was a devotee of Bhagawaan Ji. When he grew old, Bhagawaan Ji asked him to discontinue coming to see him on account of his old age.

21. Special mention may be made of Pt Shridhar Joo Dhar, President, Bhagawaan Gopi Nathi Ji Trust. He used to call at Bhagawaan Ji's place off and on, since the time the latter shifted to Pt Nila Koul Saraf's house at Dalhasanyar, Srinagar (1937-47) and receive his blessings. He rendered great service in organizing the

Turst. He, too, has earned Bhagawaan Ji's grace. He has other affiliations also. He is a saint though a householder.

Mention may now be made of the devotees who attained Bhagawaan Ji's grace after his giving up the gross body.

22. Pt Harikishan Mirza: He called at Bhagawaan Ji's place off and on for over a decade and was blessed by Bhagawaan Ji. He is well-set on the path of spirituality. He has other affiliations also.

23. Pt Mohan Kishen Ticku: He, too, has brought good *sanskaaras* from his previous births. He is a silent and unostentatious social worker and good *saadhaka*. He is poised well for a leap into the subtle realms of spirituality. He is the Organizer of the Bhagawaan Gopi Nathi Ji Trust. He took over after I relinquished the job about a year ago.

24. Pt Gopi Nath Malla: By Bhagawaan Ji's grace, his progress in the spiritual field has been remarkably swift. He has been a celebate all his life and spends much time in *saadhanaa*. He is Vice-President of the Bhagawaan Gopi Nathi Ji Trust.

25. Pt Jia Lal Nehru: He is a *saakaara upaasaka* and devoted to the Ashram work. He is the Manager of the Bhagawaan Ji Trust.

26. Pt Shyam Lal Dhar: He, too, has good *sanskaaras* and worked as Publicity Secretary of the Bhagawaan Ji Trust. He is a devoted and good worker.

27. Pt Shambhu Nath Bhan: He was a member of Shri Ramakrishna Mission. He used to come to see Bhagawaan Ji for a number of years. He was a devotee of the Divine Mother and probably had a vision of Her.

Bhagawaan ji used to give him his *chillum* very often after he had smoked it himself. He took interest in the Ashram work.

28. Pt Veshi Kaak (Gankhan, Srinagar): He used to come frequently for Bhagawaan Ji's *darshan* and is a good *saadhaka.*

29. Pt Shambhu Nath Koul (Gasi): He visited Bhagawaan Ji often for a number of years and was helped by him out of many predicaments. He was a devotee of the Divine Mother.

30. Pt Jawahar Lal Malla: He is blessed as during the period 1957-68 Bhagawaan Ji stayed at his house. He is the son of Kamala Ji (the daughter of a sister of Bhagawaan Ji's). He served Bhagawaan Ji well. He has retained some relics of Bhagawaan Ji including his *aasana* in his own house.

31. Pt Triloki Nath Kaachru: He is the son of Bhagawaan Ji's younger sister. He used to call at Bhagawaan Ji's place off and on and serve him. He is blessed as he (Bhagawaan Ji) was his maternal uncle. He consolidated the accounts of the Ashram.

32. Pt Radha Kirshna Bazaz: He took a great interest in the establishment of the Bhagawaan Ji Ashram. In fact, he, along with Pt Gopi Nath Malla, helped us in the establishment of the Ashram at its present site.

33. Shri Justice J.N. Bhat: He visited Bhagawaan Ji only on a few occasions but took a keen interest in the welfare of the Ashram.

34. Hakim Shyam Lal Bhat: He visited Bhagawaan Ji off and on, held him in great reverence and found peace and solace in his presence.

35. Pt Amarchand Kaw: This venerable old man, who had been having the *parikramaa* of the Sharika Bhagawati Shrine daily for a number of years used to come to visit Bhagawaan Ji every day for over a decade.

36. Pt Thakur Das: He went to the Haari Parvat Shrine practically all his life in the morning and was a pious man. He visited Bhagawaan Ji for a number of years every Sunday.

37. Pt Triloki Nath Raina: He took a great interest in the establishment of the Ashram at the earlier stages.

38. Dr Shankar Nath Ganjoo: He and his wife were devotees of Bhagawaan Ji and would go for his *darshana* for a number of years off and on.

39. Of the lady-devotees who called often on Bhagawaan Ji, the following deserve special mention:-

i; Shrimati Rattan Rani Maam and her two blessed daughters.
ii; Shrimati Sarwanand Munshi.
iii; Shrimati Shobhawati Saraaf.
iv; Shrimati Bhuvneshwari.
v; Shrimati Naraayan Koul.

40. Mention may also be made of a group of devotees who used to call on Bhagawaan Ji every Sunday. They were:

i; Pt Janki Nath Khar.
ii; Pt Nath Ji Zadu.
iii; Pt Gwash Lal Malla.
iv; Pt Shiva Nath Bakshi.
v; Pt Niranjan Nath.
vi; Pt Vedh Lall Dhar; he played upon the santoor before Bhagawaan Ji.
vii; Pt Badri Nath Koul (Vocal Singer)

viii; Pt Saligram Khudbali.
ix; Pt M.N. Ganju.
x; Pt Somnath Kaak.

41. There is also a group of young men, devoted to the Bhagawaan Ji Ashram work, and deserve to be mentioned. They are:-

i; Shri Shaadi Lal Ji, Cashier, Bhagawaan Ji Trust.
ii; Shri Gopi Krishen Koul.
iii; Shri Janki Nath Ji.
iv; Shri Bansi Lal Khurdi.

42. Special mention must also be made of Pt Veshi Nath Ticku and Shri Jagannath Chandra Shastri. The former was Architect to the late Mahaaraaja Hari Singh. He rendered valuable advice in the construction of the Ashram at the later stages and regarding the installation of Bhagawaan Ji's statue. Shri Chandra helped in the preparation of the *Omkaara* diagrams and in some other Ashram work.

* * *

Ever since the first edition of this book appeared in the early seventies, the number of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees and disciples has swollen both inside and outside Kashmir. Some of them are in foreign countries like Australia and the USA. Many — and all those in the foreign countries — never saw him while he was in the gross body. Some spiritual aspirants say that he has been appearing in his astral form before them or in their mediation and guiding them on the spiritual path.

The number of all these is so large that it is not possible to give here an account of each howsoever brief.

GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations have been used in the brackets:

(S) Sanskrit
(H) Hindi
(K) Kashmiri
(P) Persian
(E) English

Aachaarya	(S)	Teacher; scholar
Aakaasha	(S)	Ether (Void)
Aakaasha Tattwa	(S)	The principle of Ether
Aarati	(S)	Song service
Aasana	(S)	Seat; a steady posture
Aasan-jay	(S)	Sitting in a definite posture for hours or days at a time or at a place.
Aatman	(S)	The soul, the Self, the central co-ordinating Principle of consciousness.
Absolute	(E)	The Supreme *Brahman* that presents Itself to the mind as void of all relations and determination. The Absolute is undeterminable and, at the same time, the source of all determination, and yet

		beyond them and unbound by them
Advaita	(S)	Monotheism i.e. the doctrine that there is only one God.
Agni	(S)	Fire
Aham bhaava	(S)	'I'- ness
Ahantaa Tattwa	(S)	That element in which the feeling of 'I' is not differentiated.
Ahankaara	(S)	The ego
Ajuz; Inqisaary	(P)	Humility and entreaty
Ashta siddhis	(S)	Eight kinds of supernatural powers: 1) Mahimaa - becoming very big; 2) Garimaa - becoming heavy; 3) Laghimaa - becoming light; 4) Praapti - The capacity to touch the farthest thing; 5) Prakramya - getting things done at will; 6) Animaa - becoming as small as an atom; 7) Ashitva - Lording it over all; 8) Vashitva - control over everything.
Ashram	(S)	Hermitage, a place of penance, *saadhanaa*, education etc.
Asthaapana	(S)	Shrine
Aum	(S)	The symbol of the Reality

Avadhoota	(S)	An ascetic of a very high order
Avataara	(S)	Incarnation
Awasthaa	(S)	State
Bhagawaan	(S)	The Glorious Lord
Bhakta	(S)	Devotee
Bhakti Marga	(S)	The path of devotion
Bhajana Mandali	(H)	A group of hymn-singers
Bhasma	(S)	Sacred ashes
Brahmaa	(S)	The Creator, one of the Hindu Trinity.
Brahman	(S)	The Absolute, independent of everything else, but governing, prevading and constituting all relations. He is Omnipresent, void of all qualities and yet capable of infinite qualities He is the Lord, the Doer of work and yet the non-doer and silent witness of the working of Nature.
Brahmacharya	(S)	Celebacy; continence; the discipline of attaining Brahman.
Brahma Jyoti	(S)	The radiant light of angels.
Brahma Randra	(S)	The highest spot in the brain.
Brahma Swaroopa	(S)	One who is an embodiment of what Brahman connotes.
Buddhi	(S)	Intelligence
Chaddar	(K)	Woolen rug

Chandi Hawan	(S)	Sacrificial worship of Goddess Chandi.
Chaitanya Bhandars	(S)	Sentient masses
Chillum	(K)	A receptacle for tobacco and live coals for smoking.
Chit	(S)	Consciousness in general
Chidaakaasha	(S)	The plane of consciousness
Chitta	(S)	The mind; the individual Consciousness.
Chit Shakti	(S)	The power of consciousness
Consciousness	(E)	God, a persons' consciousness of God being everywhere.
Dakshinaa	(S)	Alms; fees given to a priest for officiating at religious rites.
Darshana	(S)	Vision or seeing things or persons with attention and reveret eyes.
Daasa daaraz	(K)	The fact of dealings between one person and another or more as determined by the incomplete dealings of past births.
Devas	(S)	Deities
Devi	(S)	Goddess
Devanaagari	(H)	The script in which Sanskrit and Hindi are written.
Dhooni	(S)	Sacred fire
Dhvanyaatmka	(S)	Of sound
Guru	(S)	Preceptor; master.

Gita	(S)	*The Gita,* or *Shrimad-bhagavadgita,* the most authentic sacred book of the Hindus which synthesises the spiritual, philosophical and moral teachings of all the earlier Hindu scriptures.
Hawan	(S)	Making oblations into a sacred fire to propitiate the gods, or as a kind of worship.
Ishwara	(S)	Lord, Creator
Idantaa	(S)	One of the 36 *tattwas* according to which the 'I'—ness not yet differentiated emerged as the *Ishwara Tattwa* in the process of cosmic evolution.
Ichhaa	(S)	Will
Jala Tattwa	(S)	The principle of water
Jayanti	(S)	Birth
Japa	(S)	Counting of beads
Jeevan-mukhta	(S)	One who has attained liberation while still in the gross body.
Jeeva	(S)	The Individual soul
Jnaana Maarga	(S)	The path of knowledge
Jyoti	(S)	Light, flame.
Kaliyuga	(S)	The last and worst of the four ages according to the Hindu scriptures viz. Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali.

Karma Kanda	(S)	Rituals
Karmayoga	(S)	The system of Yoga in which all necessary action or duty is done with detachment for it and its fruit and in a spirit of dedication to God.
Karmas	(S)	Actions
Kaala	(S)	Time; the principle of decay caused by time, death.
Kathaa	(S)	The narration of some sacred scriptures.
Khos	(K)	A cup usually of bronze.
Kripaa	(S)	Grace
Kriyaa	(S)	The rituals performed for the dead; spiritual discipline.
Kundalini (Yoga)	(S)	The yoga in which the Serpent Power (the secret power at the end of the spinal cord) is awakened.
Manas	(S)	The mind
Moksha	(S)	Salvation; the release of the soul from births and deaths.
Malas	(S)	Taints
Maayaa	(S)	Illusion; the power to create illusion; the power of creation.
Manushya Lok	(S)	The world of man.
Mantra	(S)	Mystic words or verses repeated during meditations; words or verses pregnant with spiritual power.

Mahaakaala	(S)	The Lord of Death
Maha Yogi	(S)	A great Yogi
Madhyamaa	(S)	An energy involved in cosmic evolution.
Niraakaara	(S)	Incorporeal, without attributes.
Nirguna	(S)	Beyond the Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas).
Nirvaana rites	(S)	Religious rites performed for the liberation of the deceased's soul.
Nirvikaara	(S)	Unchangeable
Naaraayana	(S)	One of the Gods of the Hindu Trinity; Preserver.
Omkaara	(S)	The Symbol of God
Om Namah Shivaaya	(S)	A form of salutation to Shiva
Parikramaa	[S]	circumambulation
Paramaatmaa	(S)	The Supreme Soul; the Almighty God.
Parma sant	(S)	Great Saint
Pashyanti	(S)	A specific divine energy involved in cosmic evolution.
Phiran	(K)	A loose gown worn by Kashmiris.
Poojaa	(S)	Prayer
Prashaad	(S)	Sweets etc. distributed after ceremonial worship; boon, gift etc.
Pratimaa	(S)	Symbol usually of metal.

Pranava	(S)	Omkaara
Pupusha	[S]	The Atlas Vertebra
Purees	(H)	Bread prepared in ghee or vegetable fats.
Pujaari	(S)	Priest, officiating at a shrine.
Purohit	(S)	(Family) priest.
Purshaartha	(S)	Determination; effort.
Rajnaa Bhagawati	(S)	Literally, queen amongst the goddesses; the Goddess of the Kshir Bhavaani Shrine in Kashmir.
Rudra	(S)	Shiva
Raasa Lilaas	(S)	Religious concerts accompanied by show.
Raama Kathaa	(S)	Sacred narration of the story of Rama.
Raaja Yoga	(S)	The system of Yoga in which the mind, along with its modifications, is stilled so that it may reflect the Reality.
Rupa	(S)	Form
Saadhu	(S)	Mendicant; spiritual aspirant.
Saadhanaa	(S)	Spiritual discipline
Saadhaka	(S)	Spiritual Aspirant
Saguna	(S)	With attributes
Saakshaatkaara	(S)	Vision of God; realization of God.
Saakaara	(S)	Corporeal; with atrributes

Sanskaars	(S)	Ingrained tendencies; impressions of the actions done.
Santoor	(K)	A musical instrument of Kashmir
Saatvic	(S)	Pertaining to the Sattva Guna, characterized by purity, light, balance.
Sanaatana	(S)	Old
Saawan Purnima	(S)	Full-Moon day in the month of Saawan.
Sat-Chit-Aananda	(S)	Knowledge - Bliss - Existence absolute.
Sat Sanga	(S)	Deliver, or listen to spiritual discourses.
Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.	(S)	Truth, Goodness, Beauty
Shesha-naaga	(S)	According to the Hindu mythology, the serpent on which Lord Naaraayana rests.
Siddha	(S)	One who has attained spiritual self-realization
Siddhi	(S)	Full attainment; perfection; spiritual realization
Siddhis	(S)	Miraculous powers
Sigdi	(H)	An iron receptacle in which fire is burnt to keep warm in winter.
Shabda	(S)	Sound
Shakti	(S)	The Goddess of powers; power; force.
Shaaradaa	(S)	The script in which Sanskrit was written in Kashmir

		before the advent there of the devanaagari script.
Shlokas	(S)	Verses
Shaiva	(S)	Pertaining to Lord Shiva
Shaivaachaarya	(S)	A teacher of Shaivism
Sharira	(S)	Body
Shri-chakara	(S)	A mystric circle, square or triangle illustrating the profound truth for the elightenment of the aspirants.
Sthita Prajna	(S)	One who is even-minded.
Stotra	(S)	Prayer-songs.
Sthaana	(S)	Place
Sufi	(P)	A class of Muslim saints
Tapasyaa	(S)	Austerities
Tasmaat saakaaram anityam; Nityam Niraakaaram iti	(S)	God without attributes (name & form) is eternal and not so with attributes.
Tattwas	(S)	Principles; elements
Tilak	(S)	The vermillion, saffron or sandal-paste mark on the forehead or between the eye-brows of a Hindu.
Trikaala Drashtaa	(S)	One who knows all about the past, the present and the future.
Trika	(S)	A school of philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.
Upaasaka	(S)	Devotee; one who practises spiritual discipline.

Upaasanaa	(S)	Spiritual discipline
Vichaara	(S)	Discrimination
Vaayu	(S)	Air
Vaaks	(S)	Sayings
Vishnu	(S)	Naaraayana; one of the Hindu Trinity.
Vairaagya	(S)	Dispassion
Yaatraa	(S)	Pilgrimage
Yajnopavit	(S)	The Hindu's sacred thread; a symbol of his initiation into true religion.

Published by
BHAGAWAAN SHRI GOPINATH JI TRUST (Regd)
Kharyar, Habbakadal, Srinagar-190001, Kashmir, (India)
Jammu Ashram : Udaiwala Road, Borhi, Jammu Tawi, India.